Solons behind Erap resolution pressuring court—Jovy

STORY ON PAGE A2

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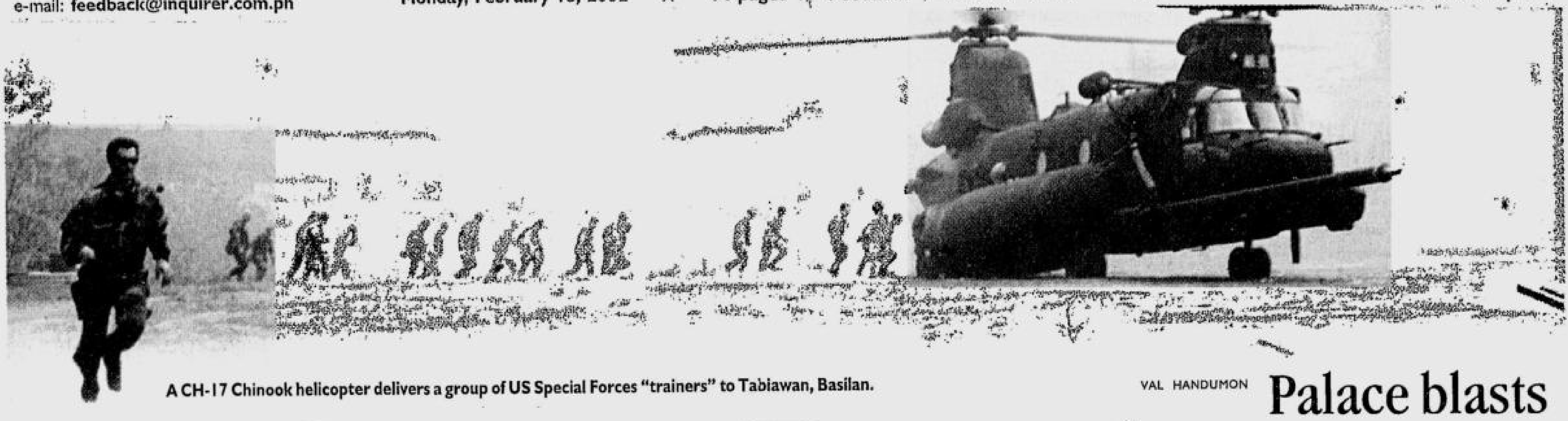
More Pentagon arrests expected

By Robert Abaño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and Carlito Pablo

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Expect the Pentagon kidnap gang to feel the heat.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez and top police and defense offi-

MORE/A18



A CH-17 Chinook helicopter delivers a group of US Special Forces "trainers" to Tabiawan, Basilan. VAL HANDUMON

US Green Berets fly into Basilan

TABIAWAN ARMY BASE, Basilan—They descended in a cloud of dust whipped up by rotor wind so fierce it ripped off the tops of three coconut trees.

Thirty members of the US Special Forces clad in jungle camouflage and armed with assault rifles ran crouching toward the edge of the helipad to escape the downdraft of the four black Chinook transport helicopters.

Security was tight. An attack helicopter whirred overhead while two Simba armored personnel carriers patrolled the camp's perimeter. Hidden in the bush nearby was an advance team of US soldiers, fingers on the trigger to foil any ambush by Abu Sayyaf bandits.

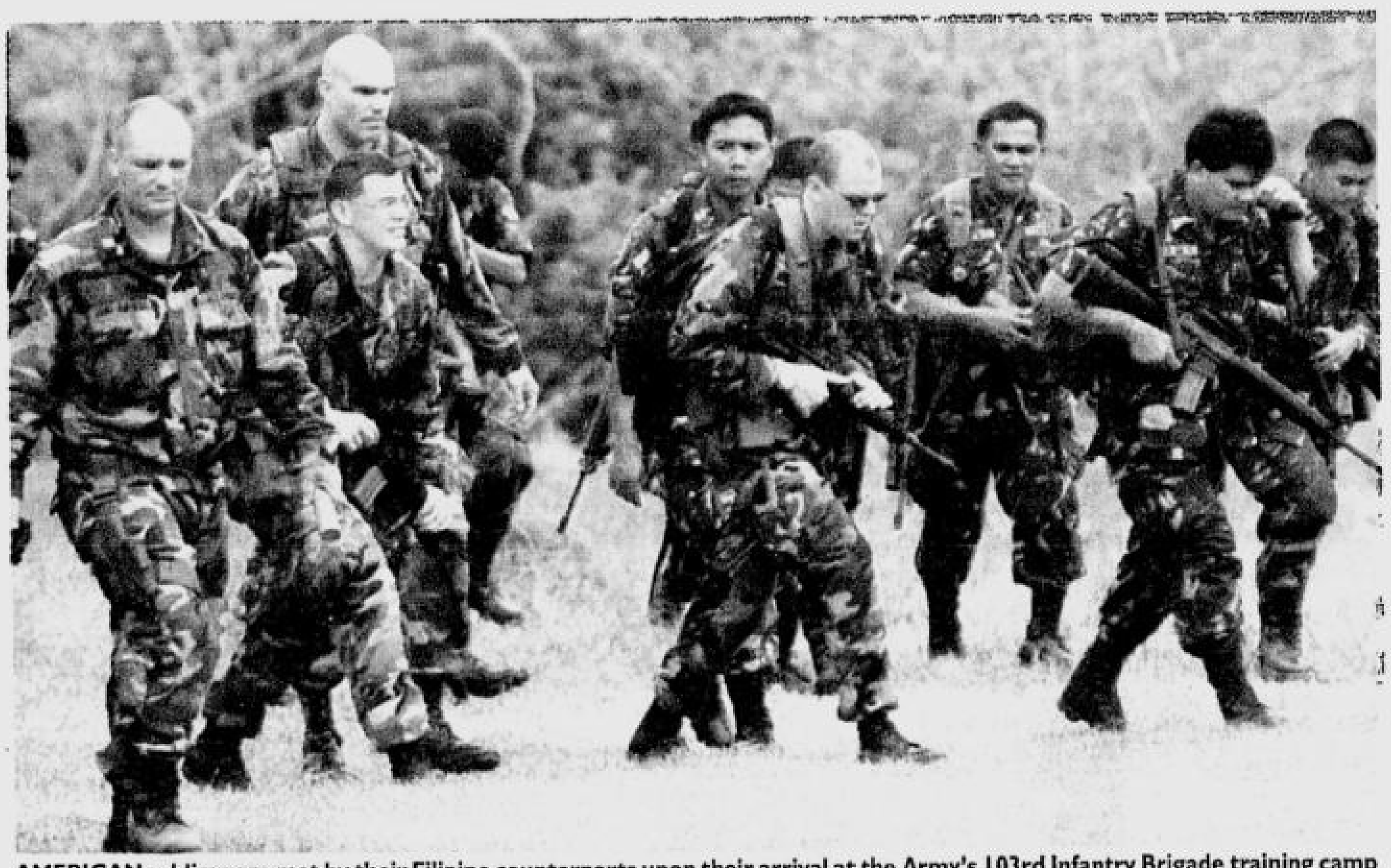
The 30 Green Beret commandos, who landed in this Army base shortly before noon yesterday, comprise the first batch of 160 Special Forces "trainers" that will be deployed in Basilan for the RP-US Balikatan 02-1 military training exercise aimed at stamping out the Abu Sayyaf.

"We always take all means necessary to defend ourselves," US Special Forces Lt. Col. David Maxwell told newsmen at the Philippine Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade headquarters, a jumble of bamboo huts, crowing roosters and grazing goats.

The landing of the Special Forces in Basilan marks the most significant expansion of the US-led campaign against terror after the destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The military estimates the Abu Sayyaf has about 80 hard-core fighters with hundreds of civilian supporters. It is one of the groups that the United States has linked to the al-Qaida network of Bin Laden, who is accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 terrorist

US/A18



AMERICAN soldiers are met by their Filipino counterparts upon their arrival at the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade training camp in Tabiawan. None of the Green Beret commandos looked like Rambo at all. VAL HANDUMON

Palace blasts Abus for Jolo, Zamboanga bombings

By Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG yesterday tagged Abu Sayyaf bandits as being responsible for the grenade explosions that rocked Jolo town in Sulu and Zamboanga City on Saturday.

"It is obvious that they've done these terrorist bombings to counter the intensified military campaign against the Abu Sayyaf and the fact that we're getting American help and assistance," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

The grenades exploded inside a crowded market in Jolo and a shopping mall cinema in Zamboanga City, killing a 14-year-old boy and wounding at least 49 others.

In Baguio City, Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Armed Forces chief of staff, said his military commanders in the area had suspicions on what group was responsible for the bombings, but he declined to name it.

"They have not come up with a firm idea on who the real suspects are although they are saying they have a lead. But right now, it's hard to say what group did it," said Villanueva, who came to Fort del Pilar yesterday to attend the alumni homecoming of the Philippine Military Academy.

Col. Roland Detabali, chief of operations of the Southern Command (Southcom) based in Zamboanga City, said in a phone interview that "there

PALACE/A18

Bush trip to Northeast Asia blunts anti-Islamic tag on terror drive

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

SINGAPORE—The political distance between the United States and Southeast Asia cannot be more pronounced than in the current visit of US President George W. Bush to South Korea, Japan and China—all in Northeast Asia.

On his departure from Washington, Bush said he intended to thank these countries for their help in the war on terrorism.

"The people of Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing touched all our hearts in the days after Sept. 11 with moving displays of sympathy and support in the wake of the terrorist attacks. Today, all three nations are supporting our fight against terrorism," he said.

No mention was made of Southeast Asian support to the US-led campaign against terrorism, although the Philippines gave robust support to it, and Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines uncovered terrorist organizations linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network.

The United States has also sent about 600 soldiers for a joint military exercise with Filipino soldiers in Basilan, the redoubt of the Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to the al-Qaida.

Some analysts here interpret the priority given to Northeast Asia as a way to avoid giving the campaign against terrorism an "anti-Islamic" accent, given that two of the leading members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—Indonesia and Malaysia—are Islamic nations.

The recent speech of Bush identified North Korea, Iraq and Iran as an "axis

BUSH/A18

Heart babies now bubbly, healthy

By Gobleth Moulic
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

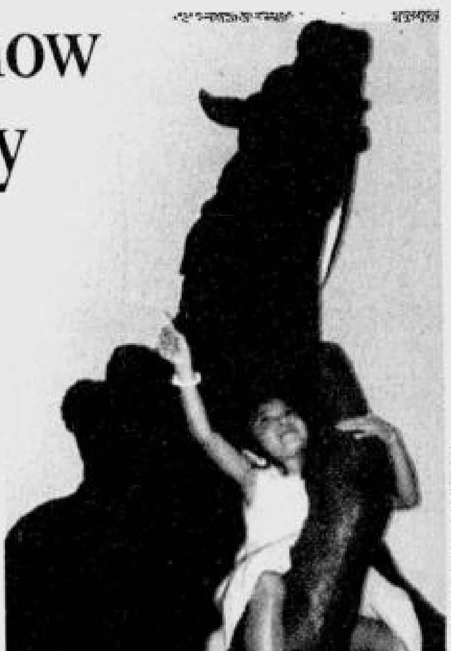
BAGUIO CITY—Five-year-old Danica Jimeno and 3-year-old Mitzi Sicay played together for the first time on a cool Saturday morning in a park here while waiting to be reunited with their "adopted" godfathers from Manila who helped them live a normal life.

The bubbly and now healthy girls, who had both undergone major operations to cure their congenital heart diseases, gamely pulled the hand of thin and fragile looking Mawin Lopena, 3, and nudged him to play *luksong tinik*.

Irritated by the girls' insistence, Lopena cried, threw tantrums and embraced his mother Renelyn, who was happily talking to Rosalyn Jimeno and Clarita Sicay, mothers of Danica and Mitzi.

Mawin has a reason to cry. He cannot run a few yards or even jump like

HEART/A18



EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

DANICA Jimeno, after heart surgery in the United States in 1999, now leads a healthy and normal life.

Ghost patients still haunting Medicare; ₱300M lost yearly

By Jerry Esplanada

(First of three parts)

Medicare Fraud
An I *Team Report*

THE COUNTRY'S National Health Insurance Program continues to lose as much as P300 million a year to fraudulent claims, including those involving so-called ghost patients.

And according to the state-run Philippine Health Insurance Corp., which administers the program, at least 11 hospitals are facing penalties for claiming Medicare benefits for non-admitted or non-existing patients.

"The number of fraudulent cases has grown to alarming proportions," said Dr. Francisco Duque III, president and CEO of PhilHealth. "We have to stop the hemorrhaging of PhilHealth. Otherwise, the corporation will incur more losses. We want to put a stop to fraudulent practices to protect PhilHealth members."

PhilHealth assumed responsibility for managing the Medicare program in October 1997 for the Government Service Insurance System and in April 1998, for the Social Security System.

According to a PhilHealth report released last year, at least 4 percent of payments for Medicare claims in 2000 were fraudulent or questionable. Total claims amounted to P6.8 billion, so this "translates to at least P272 million in losses for the corporation," the report read.

Lawyer Jay Villegas, head of PhilHealth's Fraud Prevention and Detection Unit (FPDU), said the findings were "just the tip of the iceberg."

He said if the rate of fraudulent claims remained the same in 2001, then last year's losses could have reached some P306 million. Last year, PhilHealth released some P7.7 billion

GHOST/A19

E-courts: Justice at click of mouse

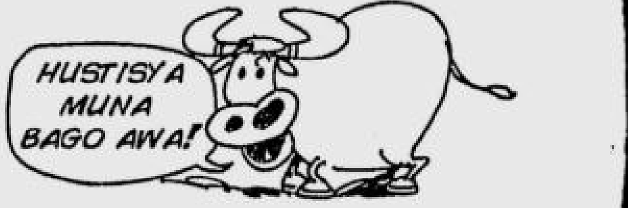
By Volt Contreras

JUSTICE at the click of a mouse? Sort of.

Select courts in Metro Manila and Cebu will soon go high-tech as part of a project aimed at cutting the huge backlog of unresolved cases the Philippine judicial system is notorious for.

Computerized note-taking machines, video equipment and cyberspace linkup may soon

E-COURTS/A7


HUSTISYA MUNA BAGO AWA!

Solons pressuring court—Jovy

DESPITE their "pretensions of non-interference," legislators who signed the twin resolutions supporting jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada's appeal to be allowed to seek medical treatment abroad were actually putting "undue pressure" on the Sandiganbayan justices trying Estrada on plunder charges, former Senate President Jovito Salonga said yesterday.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, the former senator who is president of the Kilosbayan and the founder of Bantay Katarungan civic groups, castigated the senators and representatives who, he said, could actually be declared in contempt of court.

"We cannot possibly accommodate all accused criminals, similarly situated as Erap, to leave for abroad, without destroying our system of justice beyond repair," Salonga said.

Instead of the humanitarian reasons evinced by the signatories, the proper formula that should be used in Estrada's case was "justice first, mercy later," Salonga said.

Lawmakers should be the first to maintain their obedience to the Constitution and the laws they make, as stated in their oath of office, he said, noting that among the signatories were legislators who made the crime of plunder a heinous offense under the Death Penalty Law (RA 6579).

"It seems to me they now want Erap to break free and fly the coop. This kind of lawmaking cannot be respected by our people," Salonga said.

He said the obvious purpose of the "prefabricated resolutions" was to allow Estrada to circumvent the ongoing plunder trial and enable him to go scot-free.

"In other legal systems that take pride in the rule of law, what they did would have been condemned. They could, as Sandigan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena ruled in a similar case, be declared in contempt of court," he said.

In a related development, Bayan Muna representatives yesterday said they would file in the House today their own resolution to counter the bipartisan move in Congress.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said their resolution would oppose any move to allow Estrada to go abroad for knee surgery and call for the expeditious resolution of the jailed ex-president's plunder trial in the Sandiganbayan.

In a phone interview, Ocampo said that the group had earlier planned to file a resolution "expressing the sense of the House to see the plunder cases of Estrada expeditiously resolved" but dropped it when they were advised that this might be construed as legislative interference in a judicial matter.

But because of the House and Senate resolutions supporting Estrada's appeal to be allowed to go to the United States, Ocampo will go ahead with the planned resolution, but this time opposing any moves to allow Estrada to leave.

"It would be an injustice to many other prisoners, whether political or not, who are not accorded the same privilege and treatment," Ocampo said.

He also believes as other critics have said that excellent medical treatment for Estrada was available in the country.

Ocampo said he too had suffered from a knee injury when he was jailed as a political prisoner in the late 1980s, and recovered from it through treatment by local doctors.

Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran, meanwhile, appealed to his congressional colleagues, "particularly to those who were staunchly anti-Estrada during the last few months of his administration, to remain steadfast and to show once more their determination to carry out justice against the plundering ex-president."

"Estrada's trip, if allowed, could be his means of escape, and the cases against him will die a natural death," Beltran said in a statement.

The main proponent of the House resolution, Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen yesterday vouched "for the integrity of Estrada" who he insisted would return after his medical treatment abroad.

"I would put at stake my integrity, honor and reputation that the former president would return," Dilangalen said in a phone interview yesterday.

Dilangalen said he would file the resolution either today or tomorrow as he noted that he might be able to get the endorsement of more than 130 congressmen.

He also denied making any categorical statement that the resolution had Malacanang's blessings, saying that what he said were that many congressmen in the majority coalition were supporting it.

House Majority Floor Leader Neptali Gonzales II said that he signed the resolution because he personally thought that Estrada needed to get medical treatment abroad and that being a former president, "he deserves some respect."

"(Estrada) would be answerable to his conscience and to history," Gonzales said of the possibility that Estrada might not return.

In his statement, Salonga said that an orderly, rational system of justice was impossible where there was "a doable standard of justice—one for the poor and the weak, and another for the strong and the well-connected" such as Estrada.

Detained Moro leader Nur Misuari may have good reason to say that there was no justice in the country, he said.

Letting Estrada get away would cause the country to lose respect internationally, Salonga said. *Christine Avendaño*

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Enrile to file plunder case vs Camachos—Ople

TAXPAYER Juan Ponce Enrile, a former senator, will file a case of plunder against Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, his sister, Code-NGO chair Marissa Camacho Reyes and other government officials for alleged complicity in the P35-billion PEACe bonds scandal.

Opposition Sen. Blas Ople said Enrile, reputed to be an expert on tax law who led the finance department at one time, would file the plunder case with the Ombudsman's office this week.

Ople declined to provide details on the charges to be filed.

Senate sources said others who might be implicated in the case were: Code-NGO national coordinator Danilo Songco, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza, Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Rene Bañez and Eduardo Malinis, the head of the Insurance Commission.

Enrile earlier testified as an "expert witness" before the Senate finance committee investigating the PEACe bonds controversy.

He claimed that Code-NGO, in collusion with the approving agencies under the finance department, allegedly "raided" the National Treasury of P1.4 billion through the zero-bond issuance.

The deal concerns the Bureau of Treasury's Oct. 14 auction of P10 billion worth of zero coupon bonds which upon maturity in 10 years would amount to P35 billion.

Code-NGO, though its underwriter Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., made more than P1.4 billion from the transaction. ***Rocky Nazareno***

US troops in Basilan evoke memories of Pershing, Colt .45

By Jim Gomez
Associated Press Writer

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Before US troops landed in Basilan to help in the fight to subdue Muslim extremist rebels Sunday, they were reminded they face the same Muslim unrest that brought American Gen. John Pershing here and led to the invention of the Colt .45 pistol a century ago.

US troops took seminars on cultural sensitivity and the roots of Muslim rebellion in the poverty-wracked South as they brought America's war on terrorism to the backwaters of this former US colony.

The first batch of a 160-strong Special Forces unit was deployed Sunday to island province of Basilan to train Philippine troops to help wipe out the 80 or so Abu Sayyaf Muslim guerrillas who hold an American couple and a Filipino nurse hostage.

US President George W. Bush wanted American combat troops to take on the Abu Sayyaf, but President Macapagal-Arroyo, apparently trying to avoid arguments with nationalists and left-wing groups that helped bring her to power, declined and gave him the next best thing—war drills on the Abu Sayyaf home ground.

The seminar is meant to teach the Americans what they face and how to act in conservative Muslim communities.

"We're presenting this cultural sensitivity, the do's and don'ts, so they would not encounter problems and create new problems," said Datu Amil Jumaani, a Muslim professor who lectured the US troops at a military camp in Zamboanga City.

Jumaani said the Americans should know that the Muslim unrest in the southern Philippines has dragged on for centuries.

"It's an old war," he says.

Arab missionaries brought Islam to the Philippines in the 14th century. Spanish colonizers arrived in 1521, bringing Christianity that was embraced by the central and northern Philippines. Christian settlers later ventured farther south to Mindanao island in search of land and food, relegating the minority Muslims to the margins.

Dispossessed of their land and threatened by successive foreign invaders, Muslims waged uprisings on and off for nearly 500 years to the present.

The United States fought a war to end Spain's 377-year colonial grip on the Philippines. Spain ceded the spice-rich colony to America under the Treaty of Paris in 1898. But the Americans didn't let go of the Philippines right away, provoking unrest among Filipinos, including Muslims in the South.

In 1899, America sent a young cavalryman, John Pershing, for a campaign to crush Filipino Muslim insurrectionists, gaining battle victories and criticism with his tough methods.

He got his popular nickname "Black Jack Pershing" from the West Point military academy, after students felt his discipline was too strict and derided his past stint with an African-American unit, historians say.

A 1913 attack on Muslim rebels resisting American rule on the island of Jolo ordered by Pershing killed many Filipino Muslims; estimates range from 300 to 2,000. Pershing was criticized.

In the campaign, American troops, armed with .38-caliber revolvers, had difficulty stopping suicidal kris-wielding guerrillas called "juramentados" with a single shot. That forced them to adopt the Colt .45-caliber pistol that packs more punch.

"The .45- caliber Colt automatic revolver was invented to ward off the Moro (Muslim) warriors," a booklet given in one of the cultural sensitivity seminars for the Americans said. ***AP***

Burnhams 'absolute priority' of new US envoy

By Carlito Pablo

FRANCIS J. Ricciardone Jr., the newly appointed American ambassador to the Philippines who had averred that "my concern for the Burnhams is of absolute priority," is due in Manila this week.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said Ricciardone could arrive as early as tomorrow.

United States Embassy spokesperson Karen Kelly declined, however, to reveal the date of Ricciardone's arrival.

"We'll be sending an announcement once he arrives. We're not confirming anything in advance," Kelly told this reporter over the phone.

Ricciardone's appointment as Washington's man in Manila was confirmed by the US Senate earlier this month.

When reached by media after his confirmation, Ricciardone said his immediate priority is the safe recovery of American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham, who have been held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf terror group in Mindanao since May.

"I'm not even going to take the time to unpack," the media quoted Ricciardone as saying.

In a teleconference call with Malacañang reporters, Tiglao insisted Ricciardone's arrival was "not directly related" to the RP-US Balikatan 02-1 military exercises which got underway last week.

The joint operations involve a total of 660 American military personnel. Its real aim, however, is the rescue of the Burnham couple and a Filipino nurse, Ediborah Yap, who is also a hostage, and the annihilation of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist gang.

The US military has begun deploying 160 Green Berets in Basilan, where they will join Filipino frontline troops tracking the Abu Sayyaf, a home-grown rebel-cum-bandit group that has been linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden.

Tiglao said that despite criticism from certain militant sectors against the Balikatan, the exercise enjoys the support of majority of the people.

"Even in the media you can see snowballing support for Balikatan 02-1," Tiglao said.

A career foreign service officer, Ricciardone had been a senior adviser in the US State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs since 1999.

He has had several overseas postings, as deputy chief of mission in Ankara, Turkey and in Amman, Jordan.

Ricciardone also had experience in two multinational military deployments—as chief of civilian advisers for the multinational force in the Sinai Desert in Egypt, and as political adviser of US and Turkish generals in Operation Provide Comfort in Turkey and Iraq.

Tiglao noted that it had been a year that the US Embassy in Manila was without an ambassador.

The embassy was managed by chargé d'affaires Robert Fitts.

According to Tiglao, Ricciardone was appointed six months ago by President George W. Bush but his confirmation was delayed, prompting "even Bush to appeal to (the US) Congress."

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Cotabato City councilor, 8-year-old nephew shot dead

DAVAO CITY—Unidentified gunmen ambushed and killed a Cotabato City councilor and his nephew at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

Supt. Sangacala Dampac, Cotabato City police chief, said Alexis Costales, a third-term councilor, was driving his children and two nephews home in his red Mitsubishi Lancer when two men on a motorcycle opened fire at their vehicle with automatic rifles. The suspects fled after the incident.

Also killed was Costales's 8-year-old nephew, Clarence Cang, while Clarence's unidentified brother was slightly wounded. The councilor's three children were unscathed.

Dampac said Costales had picked up Clarence and his 6-year-old brother to play computer games with his children at the Costales home in Kimpo Subdivision, Cotabato City.

"They were about 300 meters from the Costales house when the suspects attacked," Dampac told radio dxMY.

Dampac said they were still trying to establish the identity of the suspects as well as a motive for the shooting.

"Our investigators are following up some leads," he said. ***Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Deeper probe of Parojinog ambush urged

By Jerome Aning

THE VOLUNTEERS Against Crime and Corruption and the Equal Justice Movement asked police yesterday to conduct a more thorough investigation into the ambush of Renato Parojinog, Misamis Occidental provincial board member and a former leader of the notorious Kuratong Baleleng kidnap gang.

In an interview, lawyer and E-Just spokesperson Leonard de Vera said Parojinog's assassination might have been connected to the exposes made by his client, Danny Devnani, and the possible reopening of the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case in the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

But in a press statement, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, one of those implicated in the rubout when he was still a police official, said he "saw an ugly hand behind an apparent scheme" to link him to Parojinog's killing,

VACC president and chair Dante Jimenez said Devnani was "becoming paranoid," especially after the Indian businessman and his family were nearly abducted in Parañaque City two weeks ago.

"Devnani has received reports many people are looking for him and he is scared," Jimenez said. "He has a feeling he might be next after Parojinog."

During a Senate hearing in August, Devnani revealed the alleged involvement of Lacson and ousted President Joseph Estrada in kidnapping and other criminal activities.

In a sworn statement, Devnani said he saw Parojinog five or six times between 1996 and 2000 in the company of Estrada's close friend, Charlie "Atong" Ang, and a certain Eddie Boy Villanueva.

The Indian said he was being pressured at the time by persons close to Estrada and Lacson to engage in kidnapping for ransom activities so that he could pay off his gambling debts.

In his affidavit, Devnani cited alleged conversations he had with late basketball star Arnulfo Tuadles and Kuratong Baleleng no. 2 man Joel Arnan, where both claimed Lacson had "ordered" the killing of 11 suspected members of the gang in 1995.

He quoted Tuadles and Arnan as saying "the Kuratong Baleleng wanted to assassinate Estrada and Lacson because of the rubout," but subsequent negotiations between the gang and Estrada's emissary, Eddie Boy Villanueva, averted this.

"The deal that was brokered was the Kuratong Baleleng would be allowed to commit kidnappings for ransom, and the group of Lacson and Ang would supply the victims," Devnani said.

Tuadles was shot to death in Devnani's Club 491 on Nov. 2, 1996, while Arnan was arrested and killed in 1997.

In a statement, Lacson said the attempt to link him to the Parojinog killing was "stupid and insensible" because the ambush and the reopening of the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case were not related.

"My fellow police officers and I have suffered enough," the senator said. "Some people are hell-bent on putting me away for good using this case and a series of other fabricated poorly executed cases."

Parojinog's brother, Reynaldo, mayor of Ozamiz City and himself a former Kuratong Baleleng member, told radio station dzMM yesterday he thought "local politics" was to blame for the killing.

Reynaldo said there had been no misunderstanding between his brother and Lacson and the two were even party mates in the last elections.

Devnani said he had repeatedly tried to tell Estrada, who had by then become President, about the illegal activities of his subordinates.

But when he was finally granted an audience at Malacañang on July 4, 1999, Estrada "did not want to listen," Devnani said.

"Instead he gave me a check. Then he stood up. It was obvious to me that he did not want to hear what I knew about the kidnappings for ransom," Devnani said.

For sale: Recruitment license

By B. Rivera

FOR sale: Recruitment license. Price negotiable.

Panicky recruitment agencies have started selling off their licenses as the new and stricter rules governing the recruitment industry kick in.

The Federated Associations of Manpower Exporters Inc. (FAME) said on Friday that some recruitment agencies, particularly those recruiting workers for Singapore and Hong Kong, were getting out of the industry.

FAME spokesperson Loreto Soriano said two recruitment firms have asked him to help them dispose of their licenses for a very low price. Many more are expected to follow.

Soriano said that with the higher capitalization requirements set by the Department of Labor and Employment, many agencies have decided to either close shop or recruit only high-end workers for blue-collar jobs.

Licenses used to cost about P4 million. But with the stricter rules, the firms would be taking more risks. This has brought down the value of their businesses to P1 million or even P700,000.

Soriano said that for the agencies to be able to afford the new rates and continue operations, they would have to accept only applicants for jobs entailing a salary of not less than $400.

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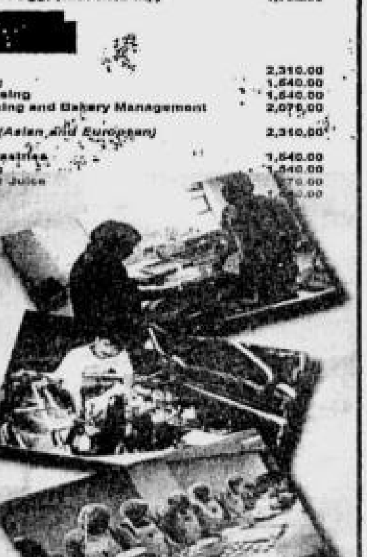

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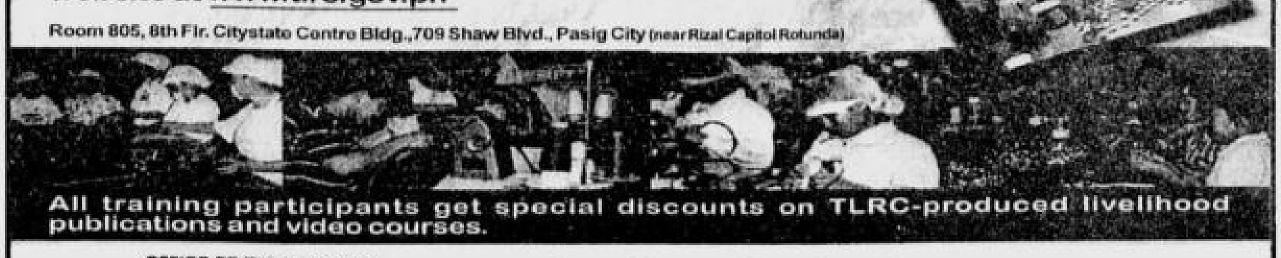

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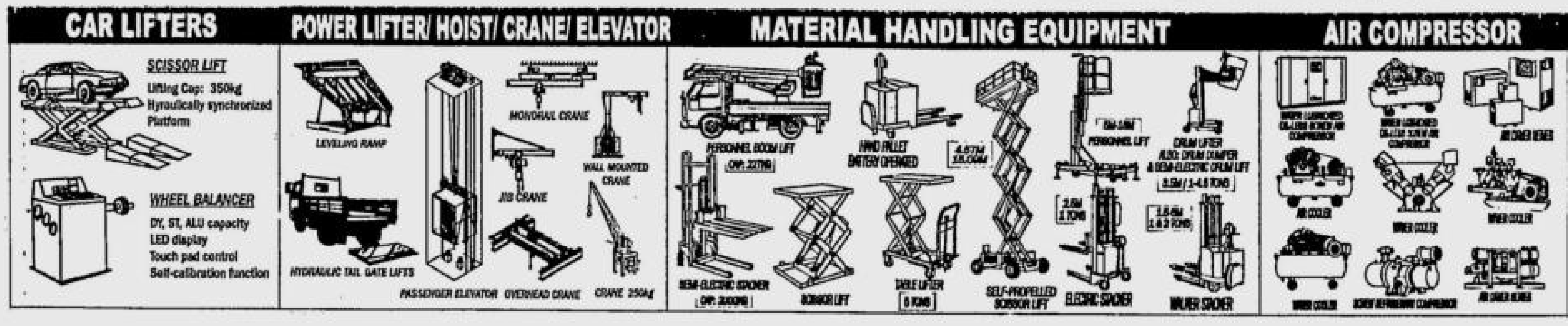

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Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes troops the long gray line of the Philippine Military Academy cadet corps with the oldest and youngest PMA alumni: retired Brig. Gen. Pedro Gonzales, PMA Class 1938 and 2Lt. Remenio Lima, PMA Class 2001.

Surrender feelers rejected

By Martin P. Marfil

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Captured Pentagon gang leader Faisal Marohambsar had sent surrender feelers but was rejected by the government because of the unacceptable conditions that he imposed, Philippine National Police chief Leandro Mendoza said yesterday.

"We rejected it and even advised (those who acted as emissaries) that he (Marohambsar) can surrender without conditions," Mendoza said in an interview at the Philippine Military Academy here.

The Pentagon kidnap gang has been holding kidnapped Catholic priest Fr. Guiseppe Pierantoni for several months now.

But Pierantoni would not be affected by Marohambsar's arrest as the priest was being held by another group, Mendoza said.

The PNP chief explained that the Pentagon gang was composed of several groups involved in abduction, hiding hostages, negotiations and intelligence gathering on potential victims.

Marohambsar, he said, was part of the gang's "think tank."

The Pentagon leader was arrested on Saturday in Quiapo.

Mendoza said the police had been monitoring his visits to Manila from Mindanao.

"We had monitored his visit to Quiapo before. This information had been longstanding but this was confirmed and developed just yesterday," he said.

Mendoza denied reports that Marohambsar had linked him to the Pentagon's criminal activities.

He said there would be an investigation on "why these things are coming out."

"We believe... that there is no compromise when it comes to kidnap-for-ransom or even small or petty crime activities," Mendoza said.

Abad dismayed by JDV snub

BATANES Rep. Florencio Abad, president of the Liberal Party has expressed dismay that the party was not included in Speaker Jose de Venecia's consultations for the holding of a political summit.

De Venecia, national chair of the ruling Lakas-NUCD, met with Sen. Edgardo Angara, head of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, leader of the Nationalist People's Coalition last week.

The three parties agreed that the summit of all political parties would be held May 3-5.

"I was surprised why the third biggest party in the House was not included in that decision-making," Abad said in a phone interview.

LP, like NPC, is part of the pro-administration coalition in the House.

Abad said that LP was never invited to De Venecia's previous discussions about a summit, "not that we want to be invited."

"They should be very careful. They should engage everybody from the very start and not present this as a fait accompli," Abad said.

Abad said the agenda for the summit should be clear.

"What can that summit do? If it's just another discussion, it would be a waste of time," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 18, 2002
1st Week of Lent
1st Reading: Lev 19:1-2, 11-18
Gospel: Mt 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of his Glory. All the nations will be brought before him, and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

The King will say to those on his right: 'Come, blessed of my Father! Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your house. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to see me.'

Then the good people will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food; thirsty and give you drink, or a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The King will answer, 'Truly, I say to you: whenever you did this to these little ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

Then he will say to those on his left: 'Go, cursed people, out of my sight into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you did not welcome me into your house; I was naked and you did not clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

They, too, will ask: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked or a stranger, sick or in prison, and did not help you?' The King will answer them: 'Truly, I say to you: whatever you did not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me.'

And these will go into eternal punishment, but the just to eternal life."

Commentary

A disturbing reading! Eternal punishment seems inconsistent with Jesus' teaching of not returning evil for evil. Does a time come when repentance and forgiveness are no longer possible? And can people really be so neatly divided into the good and the bad? Maybe these questions are not the point. Jesus, being truly human, knew no more than we or the gospel-makers what it's like when we die. But he's making a very strong statement about what it is to be human: to be part of an interconnected community, sharers in the life of God. To opt out of concern and responsibility for each other is to make of ourselves a dead branch, divorced from the tree, not a human being except biologically; certainly not an image of God. Echoes of last Thursday's first reading: "I set before you life or death." What we choose is what we get.

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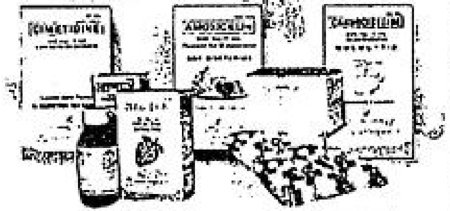

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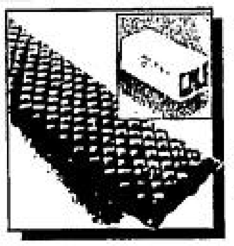

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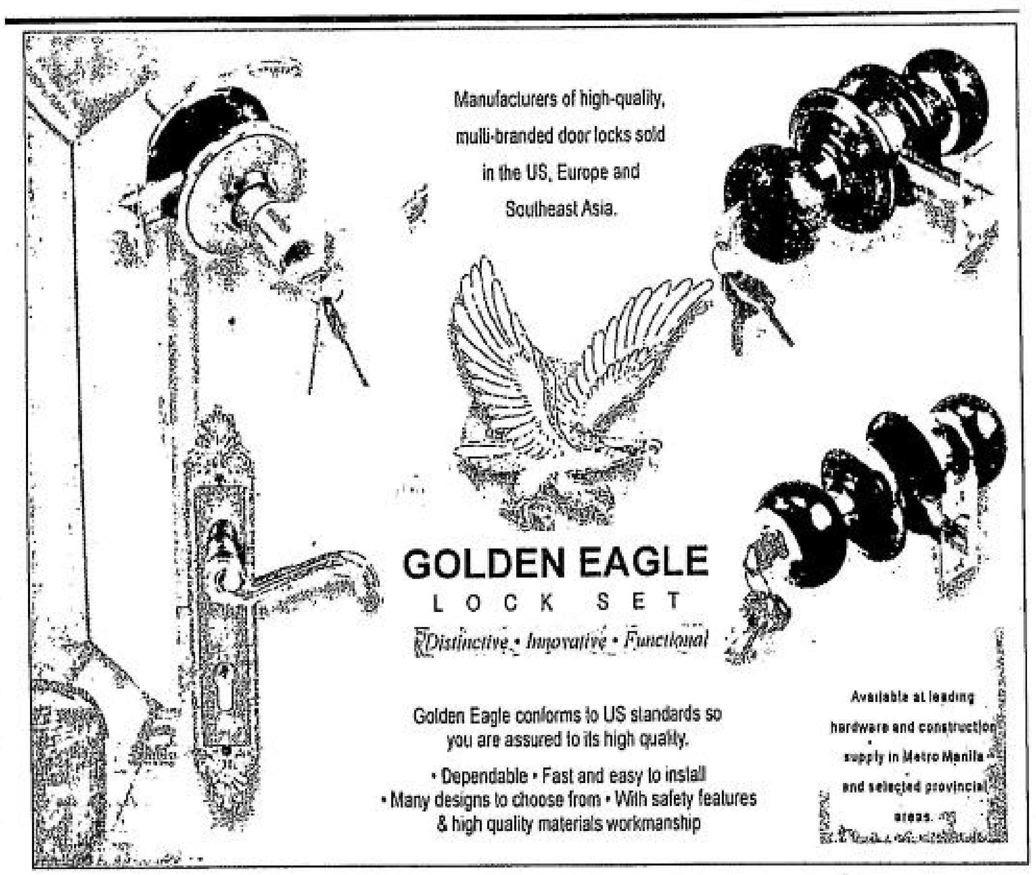

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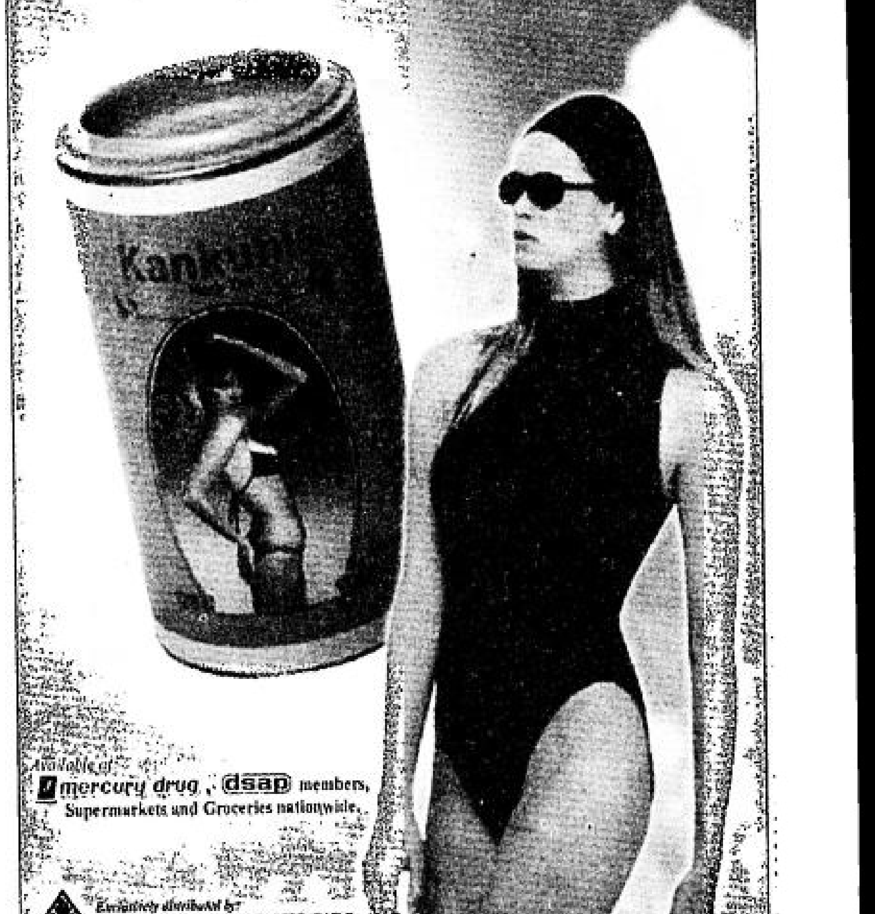

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Batangas 'Bay Watch' keeps commercial trawlers at bay

By TJ Burgonio

TINGLOY AND MABINI, Batangas—Until a couple of years ago, commercial trawlers with their powerful motorboats and sophisticated fishing equipment, had the run of Balayan Bay, fishing close to the shoreline of these two towns and causing the depletion of the bay's fish resources to the dismay of local fishermen.

Today, the trawlers still come to fish but far from the shoreline for fear they'd be caught—and their boats and fishing gear seized—by members of the Bantay Dagat (which literally means Bay Watch) who now patrol the bay around the clock against encroachments on their municipal waters.

And small fishermen have never been happier, reporting that their catch has more than doubled since the creation of the Bantay Dagat in June 2000.

Bantay Dagat is composed of volunteers from the village whose main job is to stop commercial fishing within the 15-km municipal waters zone as provided for in the Fisheries Code.

"When we were ruled by those foreign fishers, our catch went down. But when Bantay Dagat started patrolling the waters, our catch got better by the day," said Josefino Manalo, 41, who lives in the sleepy island town of Tingloy and who has been fishing for the past 25 years.

Ben Ortega, 39, a fisherman in the neighboring town of Mabini, echoed Manalo's view. He said the Bantay Dagat volunteers have succeeded not only in keeping the commercial fishers out of the 15-km municipal waters zone but also in stopping illegal fishers from the villages.

"They are a big help. They are feared by these commercial fishers who until recently have bled the bay dry of fish resources. We're far better off now with these commercial fishers out of our sight," he said.

The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Philippines, which organized the Bantay Dagat units in Tingloy and Mabini said local fish catch has gone up by as much as six times within a year.

On a normal day, droves of commercial fishing boats could be seen in the bay, most of them from the towns of Calaca, Lemery, Nasugbu and Calatagan and from as far away as Malabon and Navotas in Metro Manila. But now they are careful to stay out of the 15-km municipal waters zone.

Bantay Dagat members in Tingloy and Mabini said they have lost count of the number of commercial fishers they have busted since they started patrolling the bay two years ago.

They said the commercial fishers use high-speed motorboats and more advanced fishing gear like the *baslig* (bag net) and *pukot* (ring net).

While the team is not authorized to make arrests, it is allowed to confiscate boats, fishing gear as well as the illegal catch of the poachers.

The volunteers usually set out at night or the early morning to patrol the bay, using a motorboat armed with radios and accompanied by a policeman, if necessary.

"We usually bust those who come near the shore," said Nestor Austria, who heads the Bantay Dagat unit in Mabini.

WWF-Philippines established Bantay Dagat in the two towns mainly to protect and conserve the coral reefs in the bay's 15-km zone. Quoting Dr. Flor Lacanilao of the UP Marine Institute, it said the fishing ground had been overexploited mainly because of the encroachment of commercial fishers on the municipal waters.

"We saw the immediate need to protect the waters not only from commercial fishers but also from illegal fishers who use dynamite and nets with smaller holes," said Joel Gutierrez, the WWF community organizer in Mabini.

WWF provides a daily cash allowance for the volunteers and pays for petrol. It plans to set up other Bantay Dagat units in the other coastal towns of Batangas in coordination with the police of the Southern Tagalog region.

The volunteers say local officials of Tingloy and Mabini have been quite supportive of their work.

The municipal council of Mabini has passed an ordinance in support of protecting the 15-km municipal waters zone from commercial fishers while its counterpart in Tingloy has passed an ordinance banning illegal fishing.

Mabini councilors have also approved funds for the gasoline and uniforms of the volunteers starting this year, said councilor Eli Sawali, chair of the committee on environmental protection, fishery and agriculture.

Local fishermen believe the full implementation of the environment department's Administrative Order No. 17, also known as Dao 17, laying down the guidelines for the delineation of the 15-km municipal waters zone, would help to drive away commercial trawlers for good.

"That would improve the lot of small fishermen like me because when that is enforced, commercial fishermen won't be able to enter the 15-km zone. It will be a lot easier for us to make a living," said Ortega.

Issued on June 13, 2001, Dao 17's implementation has been snagged by some legislators with extensive commercial fishing interests who have questioned its legality. The justice department has declined to rule on the issue. Meanwhile, Dao 17's implementation hangs in the air.

But for now, local fisherfolk are simply happy that the commercial fishers have been kept at bay.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (OBLIGATIONS AND CONTRACTS)—Legal compensation—Compensation is a mode of extinguishing to the concurrent amount the obligations of persons who in their own right and as principals are reciprocally debtors and creditors of each other. Legal compensation takes place by operation when all the requisites are present, as opposed to conventional compensation, which takes place when the parties agree to compensate their mutual obligations even in the absence of some requisites. Legal compensation requires the concurrence of the following conditions: (1) that each one of the obligors be bound principally, and that he be at the same time a principal creditor of the other; (2) that both debts consist in a sum of money, or if the things due are consumable, they be of the same kind, and also of the same quality if the latter has been stated; (3) that the two debts be due; (4) that they be liquidated and demandable; (5) that over neither of them there be any retention or controversy, commenced by third persons and communicated in due time to the debtor. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, PNB Madecor v. Uy, G.R. No. 129598, August 15, 2001]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

Where's P5-billion seed money for Tesda?

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE TECHNICAL Education and Skills Development Authority is asking the government to cough up the P5 billion the Tesda development fund should have received years ago.

Tesda head Lucy Lazo complained that past administrations not only neglected Tesda, they maintained a "societal bias" against technical education.

Lazo said the government has yet to allocate the P5 billion in seed money for Tesda, which was stipulated in Republic Act 7796, known as the Tesda Development Act of 1994.

Lazo said the law provides that the government gives the P5 billion within five years of the creation of the agency which caters to the needs of some eight million out-of-school youths (OSY).

The money is separate from the Tesda budget specified in the General Appropriations Act every year, which Lazo pointed out was likewise insufficient to meet the needs of OSY and displaced workers.

"There's an anomaly in the way we budget funds. Something's wrong somewhere," Lazo said.

"The societal bias against technical education is also real," she said, adding: "We should have a major paradigm shift."

Lazo said the Department of Education, which delivers basic education, gets around 80 percent of the national budget for education. The Commission on Higher Education gets about 15 percent and Tesda gets what is left of the pie.

Lazo said Tesda should get better treatment from the government because it is technical education that gets our workers jobs abroad.

She said that more than half of overseas Filipino workers, who contribute some $8 billion annually to the domestic economy, work as carpenters, plumbers and take on "all the dirty work that foreigners don't like to do."

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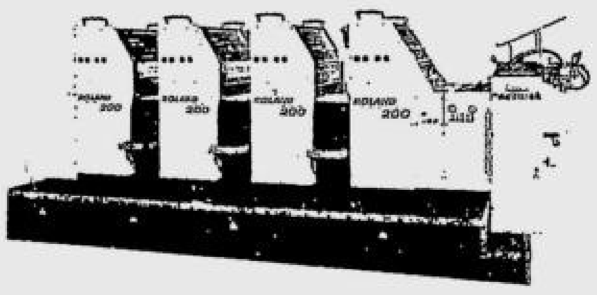

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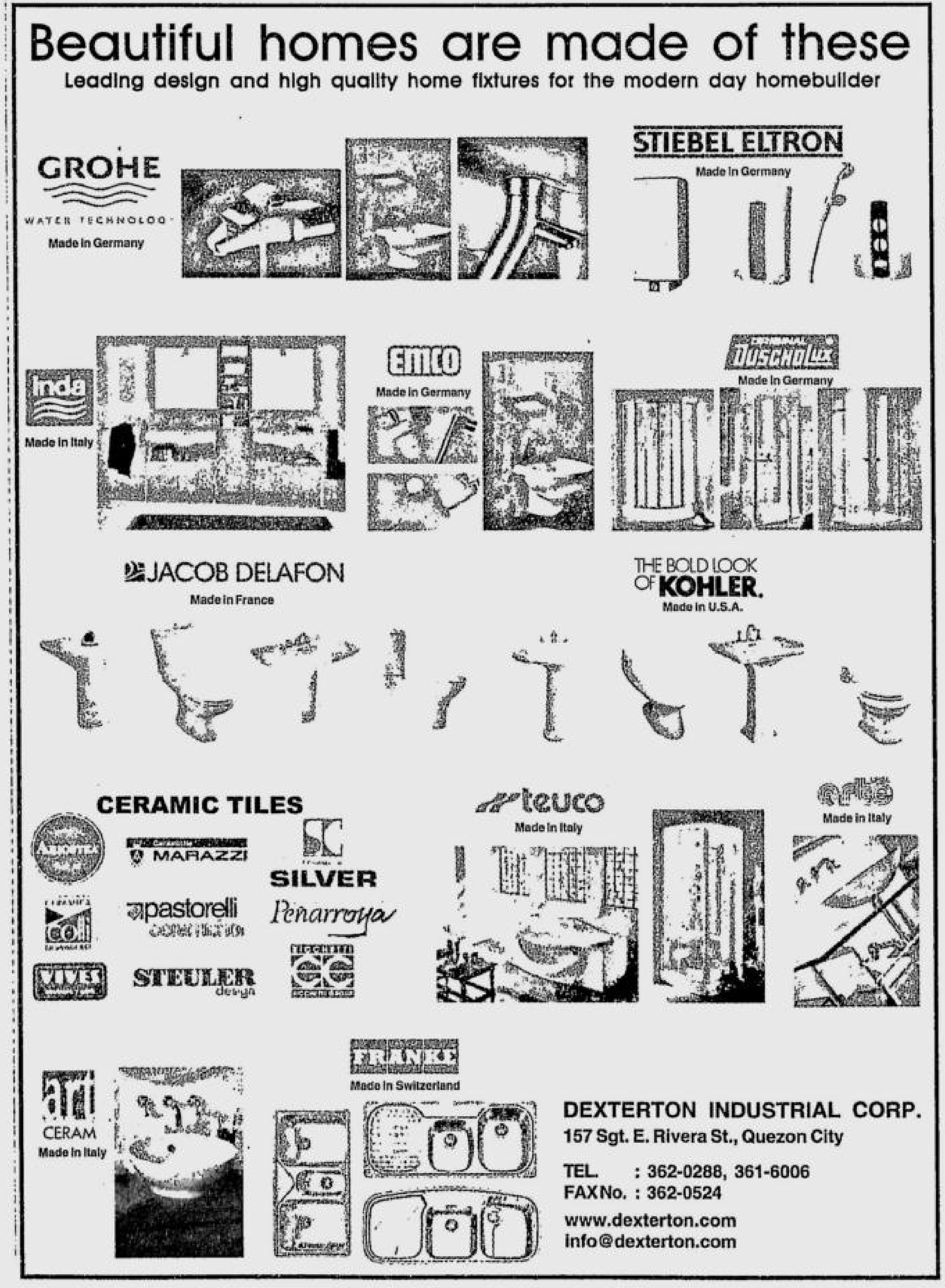

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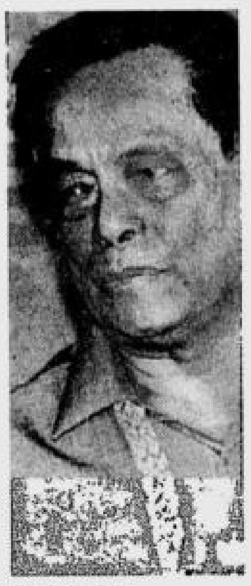
From page A1



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come to the country's understaffed courts.

The package spells bad news for incompetent or corrupt judges because the Supreme Court can now monitor the progress of their cases online.

The creation of the country's first "Electronic Courts," an initiative of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., easily won the support of the Supreme Court and local government units.

"E-courts can eliminate or at the very least greatly reduce case backlogs," Pimentel said in a statement announcing the allotment of funds for the project in the 2002 national budget.

With the help of network linkages between local courts and the Supreme Court, the performance of judges can be evaluated faster without waiting for the actual performance reports.

The high tribunal, particularly the Office of the Court Administrator, can also "check the number and propriety of temporary restraining orders (TROs) issued by a particular lower court."

Pimentel said the online information available to the Supreme Court could be used as basis for promotion of judges to appellate courts.

Point men

The project's designated point men are the Supreme Court's chief information officer, Ivan Uy, and Assistant Solicitor General Karl Miranda.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Uy and Miranda said "pilot E-courts" were being set up and would be operational within the next three months.

One trial court each in Makati, Mandaluyong, Marikina, Caloocan, Quezon City and Cebu has been selected to launch the project, according to Miranda.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to modernize all the courtrooms in the country through increased congressional funding for Pimentel's initiative.

The pilot E-courts will be upgraded in stages to have the following features:

- Computer Aided Transcription Machines (CATs)—the court stenographer's best friend. Once trained in operating this machine, the scribe will be able to produce transcriptions of a testimony just a few hours after the witness took the stand. High-end units can even provide "real-time" transcription.

Miranda said CATs' deciphering program could be expanded to include Filipino words—or any language for that matter—since "its vocabulary grows with usage. Once a new word enters (the program) it's automatically recognized the next time it crops up."

- Video Room—Designed specially for cases involving underage complainants or witnesses, this enclosure will enable them to give testimony via video feed without the "intimidating" sight of the accused inside the courtroom.

While the minor can say his or her piece in front of the camera, the accused—along with the judge, counsels and the court audience—can watch the child and thus still exercise his constitutional right to "confront" his accuser, according to Miranda.

- Trial court website—Concerned parties, mainly lawyers, can visit the website for quick information regarding hearing schedules, orders and decisions on specific cases.
- Computer linkup to the Supreme Court—The high tribunal can access a certain e-courts records to determine whether its rules for the speedy disposition of cases had been complied with.

"Overaging" cases, for example, will have their case numbers "either turning red or go blinking" on the computer screen, according to Miranda.

Ready transcripts

Uy said the installation of the CATs is relatively the easiest and thus the first "implementable" component of the project.

At present, the Supreme Court is the only Philippine court equipped with the CATs. It has 12 units which were acquired from the United States in the mid-1990s at about P500,000 each.

To demonstrate just how the CATs are direly needed in local courts, Uy said: "Do you know that it takes an average of four hours for our stenographers to manually transcribe just one hour of notes?"

"It thus takes weeks before the transcripts become available to the lawyers. And what if the stenographer suddenly goes on sick leave or, worse, resigns? Hearings often get postponed for months while the parties await the transcripts," Uy said. "In the worst of situations, entire testimonies are repeated when the concerned stenographer leaves."

Uy said Pimentel's "E-courts" project was mainly inspired by the CATs' reliable performance during the Senate impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada.

In that historic trial, the machines were used for the first time outside the Supreme Court to meet the documentation requirements of the daily proceedings.

Miranda further recalled that, thanks to the CATs, "transcripts of the day's testimonies were being posted on Pimentel's website for the public, including the foreign press, to see—within hours after the last witness."

Miranda said at least P20 million had been earmarked to launch "E-courts" this year.

Of this seed fund, P10 million will come from Pimentel's Countrywide Development Fund and the other P10 million from an "insertion" made by the senator in the Supreme Court's 2002 budget.

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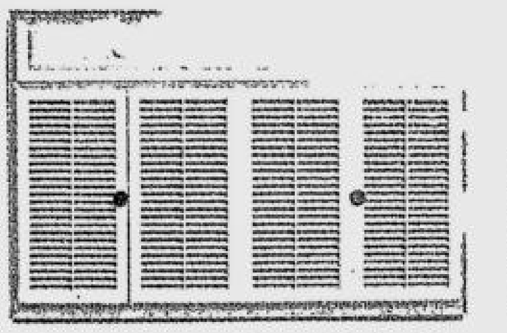

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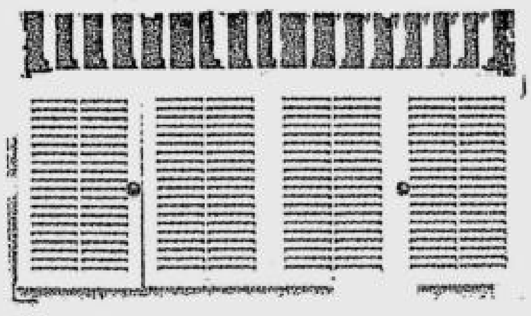

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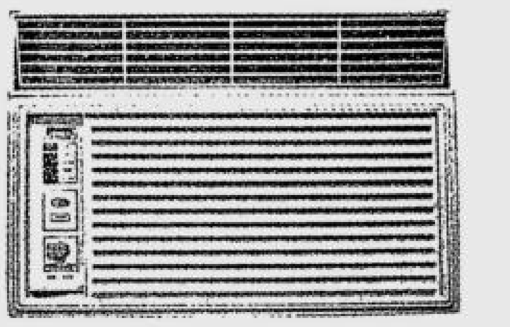

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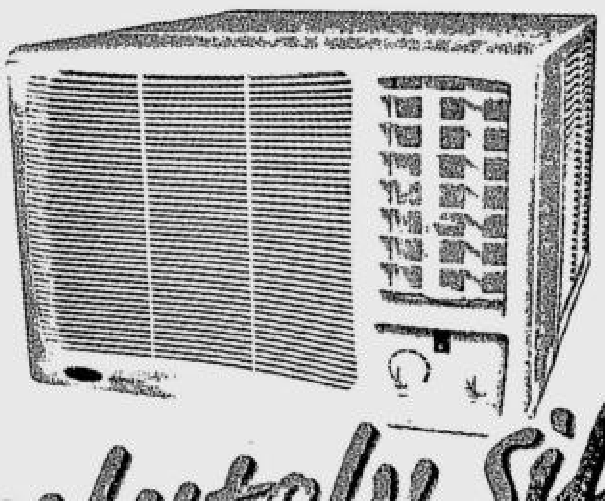

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EUGENIA D. APOSTOL
Founding Chairman

INQUIRER
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OPINION

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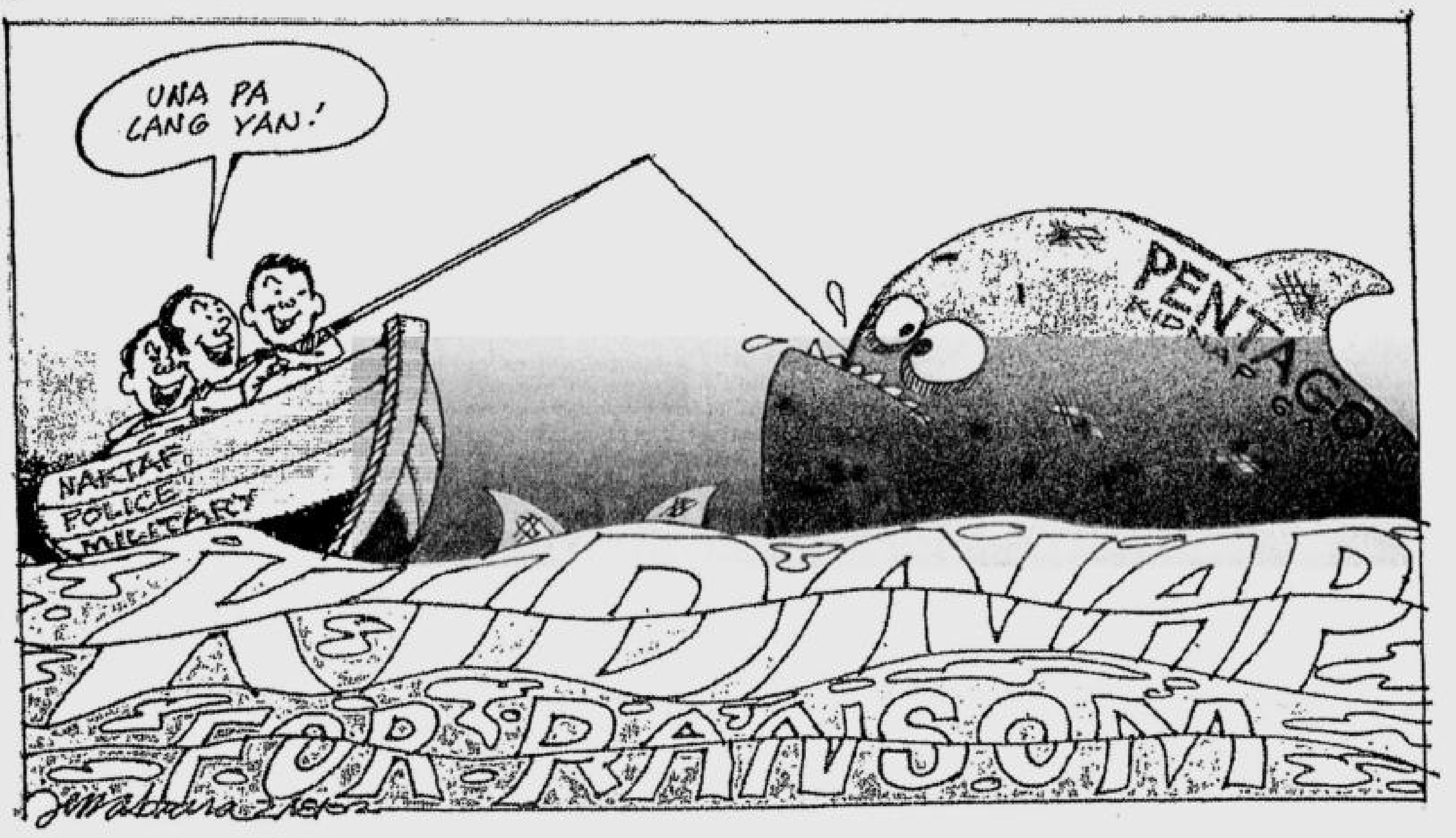

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AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

"ANY threat to the...leader was handled with brutal dispatch. Once a fishing boat slipped through the 16-km cordon in front of the beach house, coming within a few hundred meters off the shore...A guard let off warning shots and then opened fire, killing two people on board. The guard got a medal; the families of the victims were told their relatives died in the line of duty and were awarded color television sets and refrigerators. Another time...a car, apparently lost...drove onto a paved road leading into the beach house...Guards shot the driver. A passenger had jumped out and was trying to run away. Guards shot him twice in the back."

A car driven by an engineer inadvertently strayed into the presidential convoy at the North Luzon Expressway. The car was stopped by the Presidential Security Group in the convoy. Television footage showed the driver being slapped and kicked by the PSG escorts.

The first paragraph is a quote from a Time Magazine story about a former bodyguard relating abuses by the security guard of Kim Jong-il, the despot of North Korea. The second paragraph is a description of an incident right here in the Philippines involving the bodyguards of our very own President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. North Korea is a dictatorship; the Philippines is supposed to be a democratic country. But the similarity in the abuses of the bodyguards of the two leaders is frightening. The engineer-driver wasn't killed, but he could very well have been shot by the PSG escorts and then called the incident as an attempted assassination of the President.

In spite of the wide publicity on the incident in media, the President has not, as far as is known, reprimanded the PSG escorts or admonished them to be less brutal and abusive on her constituents.

Power, or even just the nearness to power, does something to people. It makes them abusive and cruel. All traces of good manners disappear. This is true whether the people are presidential guards or just security guards of a subdivision. They mistakenly arrogate to themselves the power and authority of their bosses. Even lowly workers who believe they are being protected by somebody powerful strut around and boast of their connections. Bodyguards, especially, think their principal duty is to beat up people.

President Macapagal wastes so much time—time she needs to steer the ship of state well—visiting poor communities, distributing relief goods and making promises to court their loyalty—and their votes in 2004. But one incident of abuse like the North Luzon Expressway beating is enough to destroy all her public relations efforts. Especially if she does not do anything to correct the abuses of her guards.

We are in the Philippines; we are not in North Korea. We are not a dictatorship (yet); we are still a democracy. The President should knock that into the heads of her bodyguards.

* * *

I suspect President Macapagal really wants former President Estrada out of the country, as she did not want Nur Misuari back in the Philippines. She consented to take him back only after Malaysia gave her an ultimatum.

She has her reasons: They are both pains in the neck, best left in some other country. Back here, their followers will only spoil her chances in the 2004 presidential elections.

That is why the two congressional resolutions to allow Erap to go abroad for an operation of his arthritic knee got so many signatures so quickly, even from administration senators and congressmen. The same members of Congress who were behind Erap's impeachment signed the resolutions. They would not have been that eager to sign had there not been a signal from Malacañang. The President's statement that she will not interfere is a dead giveaway. It has the same credibility as the claim of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho that he did not interfere in the awarding of P35-billion worth of bonds to Code-NGO headed by his sister.

True, as Portia said "the quality of mercy is not strained," etc., etc., but common sense dictates that you give mercy only to those who admit their guilt, repent and ask forgiveness. Neither Erap nor Misuari (nor the Marcoses) have done that. On the contrary, they are still as arrogant and proud as ever, as though they are still running the country.

You let Erap go now and you can say goodbye to him for life—and to justice to the Filipino people. If you were Erap already in the United States and facing a long prison term in the Philippines, would you still come back? He must have given up on his battery of high-priced lawyers whose only defense seems to be to delay the trial. Their recent statement that they may withdraw as his counsel must have been the last straw. When lawyers withdraw from a case—as some of Erap's lawyers did in the previous cases they handled—the likelihood is that it is a losing case and the lawyers want to save themselves the dishonor of losing a case.

But the most important consideration is what such leniency would mean to the trusting witnesses against Erap. Nobody will agree to testify against high officials anymore. What are we telling our people? That there is really no justice in the Philippines? That if you are powerful, you can steal billions of pesos and get away to enjoy your loot? Isn't the example of the Marcoses enough to prove those lessons? Must we add Erap to drive home the point?

Let's hope the special division of the Sandiganbayan stand by the people, not by their representatives (how ironic) and reject the petition to have Erap's knees repaired abroad. Dozens of Filipino doctors can do that here. Don't belittle the abilities of Filipino doctors; they are as good as the best in the world.

* * *

Comments to asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Another blast from the past

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT was Apolinario Mabini who was a stickler for things being written down. He was probably the most legalistic of Emilio Aguinaldo's men, having taken up some courses in law before being struck down by paralysis. For those who have not read their history—and I have learned over the years never to underestimate the extent of this—this was shortly before the turn of the last century. The Americans had brought the Filipino revolutionaries from Hong Kong back to the Philippines with stout guarantees that they wanted nothing more than to see the country free itself from Spain.

Mabini, who had become Aguinaldo's chief adviser soon after the latter returned, was unconvinced. He wanted ironclad assurances the Americans would leave after they defeated the Spaniards, who were in dire extremities. The need for those assurances became more and more emphatic with more and more American troops descending on the country, which augured only for their staying here permanently. Throughout much of 1898, which saw the Battle of Manila Bay, which was the original acoustic war, full of sound and fury signifying nothing, and the Treaty of Paris, where Spain sold the Philippines to the United States at a bargain-basement price rather than turn it over to the *indios*, Mabini was at pains to secure from Admiral George Dewey a written statement of their intentions. Dewey would hear nothing of it.

Despite their own suspicions, Aguinaldo and the other revolutionaries were content to take the word of the American officers, used as they were to a culture steeped in *palabra de honor*. It was Mabini who insisted that wasn't enough. But looking back, even that now seems like a terribly naïve notion. Even if Mabini had managed to inveigle a written avowal of intentions from Dewey, or any of the generals that came to reinforce his navy, it is extremely doubtful the revolutionaries could have made it stick. The Americans saw taking the Philippines, along with Cuba and Puerto Rico, as "manifest destiny," and nothing would stand in the way of that imperative. Certainly not a piece of paper signed by a navy officer.

I remembered this when I read about Sen. Rodolfo Biazon expostulating over President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "cavalier attitude" toward the parameters, or terms of reference, of the American troops in Basilan. Those terms of reference, he said, are our only guarantee that the United States would not abuse its stay here, and would leave as soon as the "war game" is over. The fact that the President has shown little interest in defining, or delimiting, the nature of American military presence in this country, said Biazon, must show she has surrendered the country's foreign policy entirely to President George W. Bush.

Except for one very strange twist of fate, what we have today is pretty much the same situation we had more than a century ago.

The justification for American military presence here today takes on the same obdurate categorical imperative as McKinley's "manifest destiny." Bush spelled it out in black and white a couple of weeks back when he said it was America's right to strike anywhere, particularly in places that were hotbeds of terrorism, or were timid about fighting terrorism. Which included the Philippines—he said it expressly. A century ago, McKinley found moral thunder for this in the presumed sinking of an American warship, the Maine, by terrorists. Today, Bush has found moral thunder for this in the actual razing of the World Trade Center by terrorists. Even if Biazon had his way, it is extremely doubtful he would be able to stop the Americans from doing what they want. Certainly not with TORs, which are like putting an uncooperative genie back into the lamp.

The battle between the combined force of Philippine and American troops, displaying an array of powerful firearms, and a small band of cutthroats has the Battle of Manila Bay written all over it. It will probably not remain an acoustic war but will lead to bloodshed. That does not make it any less farcical. The Armed Forces of the Philippines cannot solve a problem like the Abu Sayyaf, it should shoot itself in the head, not bring foreign troops to do that for the country.

As it was more than a century ago, more and more American troops are coming to the Philippines, and even more are expected to come, to reinforce the ones that are already here. That alone should dispel the notion they are here only—if at all—to fight the Abu Sayyaf, and will disappear as soon as the Abu Sayyaf does. They of course do not represent an occupation force, for the benefit of the literal-minded, who may object to the parallel. But they do represent occupation in quite another sense, which is the conversion of the country into an American theater of military operations. As it stands now, it is hard to see how they can be stopped from building a naval base in the south, and making the country a staging ground for military action in the Middle East and elsewhere. Short of monumental national outrage.

Which brings me to the one respect where our situation today is unlike the one during Mabini's time. Which is that then, the Filipino leadership was united in protesting the American intrusion into Philippine affairs, being merely powerless to stop it. Today, it's the very leadership that's united in inviting it, though being in a position to stop it, or at least to try mightily to do it. Even those who initially opposed Ms Macapagal, who not quite incidentally is not unlike Aguinaldo in having usurped power, have pretty much caved in. It's only the people that made both Edsas happen that continue to protest it.

Those who do not read their history are not just condemned to repeat it. They are condemned to repeat it—farcically.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@ vasia.com

EUGENIA D. APOSTOL
Founding Chairman

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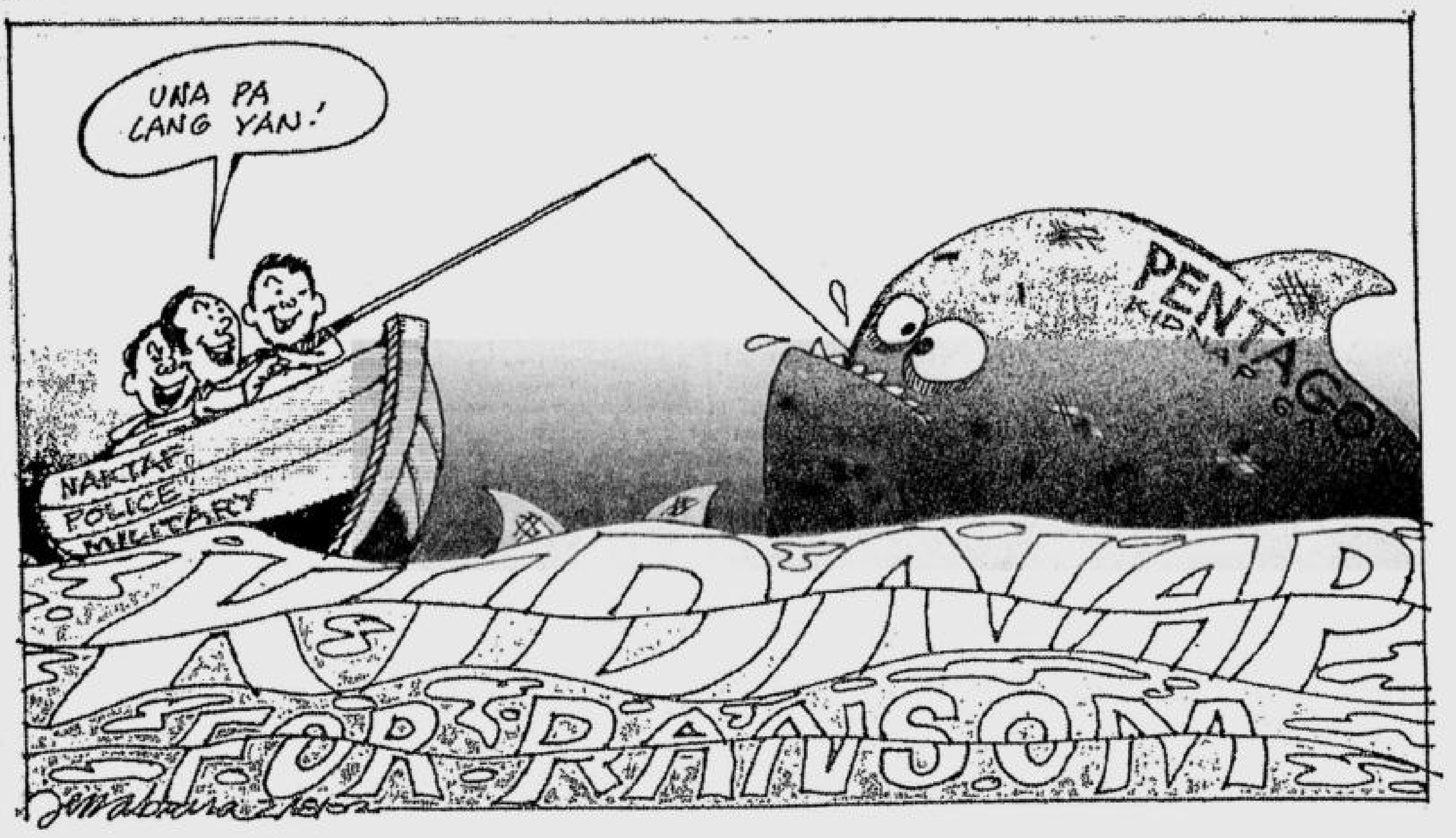

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"ANY threat to the...leader was handled with brutal dispatch. Once a fishing boat slipped through the 16-km cordon in front of the beach house, coming within a few hundred meters off the shore...A guard let off warning shots and then opened fire, killing two people on board. The guard got a medal; the families of the victims were told their relatives died in the line of duty and were awarded color television sets and refrigerators. Another time...a car, apparently lost...drove onto a paved road leading into the beach house...Guards shot the driver. A passenger had jumped out and was trying to run away. Guards shot him twice in the back."

A car driven by an engineer inadvertently strayed into the presidential convoy at the North Luzon Expressway. The car was stopped by the Presidential Security Group in the convoy. Television footage showed the driver being slapped and kicked by the PSG escorts.

The first paragraph is a quote from a Time Magazine story about a former bodyguard relating abuses by the security guard of Kim Jong-il, the despot of North Korea. The second paragraph is a description of an incident right here in the Philippines involving the bodyguards of our very own President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. North Korea is a dictatorship; the Philippines is supposed to be a democratic country. But the similarity in the abuses of the bodyguards of the two leaders is frightening. The engineer-driver wasn't killed, but he could very well have been shot by the PSG escorts and then called the incident as an attempted assassination of the President.

In spite of the wide publicity on the incident in media, the President has not, as far as is known, reprimanded the PSG escorts or admonished them to be less brutal and abusive on her constituents.

Power, or even just the nearness to power, does something to people. It makes them abusive and cruel. All traces of good manners disappear. This is true whether the people are presidential guards or just security guards of a subdivision. They mistakenly arrogate to themselves the power and authority of their bosses. Even lowly workers who believe they are being protected by somebody powerful strut around and boast of their connections. Bodyguards, especially, think their principal duty is to beat up people.

President Macapagal wastes so much time—time she needs to steer the ship of state well—visiting poor communities, distributing relief goods and making promises to court their loyalty—and their votes in 2004. But one incident of abuse like the North Luzon Expressway beating is enough to destroy all her public relations efforts. Especially if she does not do anything to correct the abuses of her guards.

We are in the Philippines; we are not in North Korea. We are not a dictatorship (yet); we are still a democracy. The President should knock that into the heads of her bodyguards.

* * *

I suspect President Macapagal really wants former President Estrada out of the country, as she did not want Nur Misuari back in the Philippines. She consented to take him back only after Malaysia gave her an ultimatum.

She has her reasons: They are both pains in the neck, best left in some other country. Back here, their followers will only spoil her chances in the 2004 presidential elections.

That is why the two congressional resolutions to allow Erap to go abroad for an operation of his arthritic knee got so many signatures so quickly, even from administration senators and congressmen. The same members of Congress who were behind Erap's impeachment signed the resolutions. They would not have been that eager to sign had there not been a signal from Malacañang. The President's statement that she will not interfere is a dead giveaway. It has the same credibility as the claim of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho that he did not interfere in the awarding of P35-billion worth of bonds to Code-NGO headed by his sister.

True, as Portia said "the quality of mercy is not strained," etc., etc., but common sense dictates that you give mercy only to those who admit their guilt, repent and ask forgiveness. Neither Erap nor Misuari (nor the Marcoses) have done that. On the contrary, they are still as arrogant and proud as ever, as though they are still running the country.

You let Erap go now and you can say goodbye to him for life—and to justice to the Filipino people. If you were Erap already in the United States and facing a long prison term in the Philippines, would you still come back? He must have given up on his battery of high-priced lawyers whose only defense seems to be to delay the trial. Their recent statement that they may withdraw as his counsel must have been the last straw. When lawyers withdraw from a case—as some of Erap's lawyers did in the previous cases they handled—the likelihood is that it is a losing case and the lawyers want to save themselves the dishonor of losing a case.

But the most important consideration is what such leniency would mean to the trusting witnesses against Erap. Nobody will agree to testify against high officials anymore. What are we telling our people? That there is really no justice in the Philippines? That if you are powerful, you can steal billions of pesos and get away to enjoy your loot? Isn't the example of the Marcoses enough to prove those lessons? Must we add Erap to drive home the point?

Let's hope the special division of the Sandiganbayan stand by the people, not by their representatives (how ironic) and reject the petition to have Erap's knees repaired abroad. Dozens of Filipino doctors can do that here. Don't belittle the abilities of Filipino doctors; they are as good as the best in the world.

* * *

Comments to asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Another blast from the past

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT was Apolinario Mabini who was a stickler for things being written down. He was probably the most legalistic of Emilio Aguinaldo's men, having taken up some courses in law before being struck down by paralysis. For those who have not read their history—and I have learned over the years never to underestimate the extent of this—this was shortly before the turn of the last century. The Americans had brought the Filipino revolutionaries from Hong Kong back to the Philippines with stout guarantees that they wanted nothing more than to see the country free itself from Spain.

Mabini, who had become Aguinaldo's chief adviser soon after the latter returned, was unconvinced. He wanted ironclad assurances the Americans would leave after they defeated the Spaniards, who were in dire extremities. The need for those assurances became more and more emphatic with more and more American troops descending on the country, which augured only for their staying here permanently. Throughout much of 1898, which saw the Battle of Manila Bay, which was the original acoustic war, full of sound and fury signifying nothing, and the Treaty of Paris, where Spain sold the Philippines to the United States at a bargain-basement price rather than turn it over to the *indios*, Mabini was at pains to secure from Admiral George Dewey a written statement of their intentions. Dewey would hear nothing of it.

Despite their own suspicions, Aguinaldo and the other revolutionaries were content to take the word of the American officers, used as they were to a culture steeped in *palabra de honor*. It was Mabini who insisted that wasn't enough. But looking back, even that now seems like a terribly naïve notion. Even if Mabini had managed to inveigle a written avowal of intentions from Dewey, or any of the generals that came to reinforce his navy, it is extremely doubtful the revolutionaries could have made it stick. The Americans saw taking the Philippines, along with Cuba and Puerto Rico, as "manifest destiny," and nothing would stand in the way of that imperative. Certainly not a piece of paper signed by a navy officer.

I remembered this when I read about Sen. Rodolfo Biazon expostulating over President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's "cavalier attitude" toward the parameters, or terms of reference, of the American troops in Basilan. Those terms of reference, he said, are our only guarantee that the United States would not abuse its stay here, and would leave as soon as the "war game" is over. The fact that the President has shown little interest in defining, or delimiting, the nature of American military presence in this country, said Biazon, must show she has surrendered the country's foreign policy entirely to President George W. Bush.

Except for one very strange twist of fate, what we have today is pretty much the same situation we had more than a century ago.

The justification for American military presence here today takes on the same obdurate categorical imperative as McKinley's "manifest destiny." Bush spelled it out in black and white a couple of weeks back when he said it was America's right to strike anywhere, particularly in places that were hotbeds of terrorism, or were timid about fighting terrorism. Which included the Philippines—he said it expressly. A century ago, McKinley found moral thunder for this in the presumed sinking of an American warship, the Maine, by terrorists. Today, Bush has found moral thunder for this in the actual razing of the World Trade Center by terrorists. Even if Biazon had his way, it is extremely doubtful he would be able to stop the Americans from doing what they want. Certainly not with TORs, which are like putting an uncooperative genie back into the lamp.

The battle between the combined force of Philippine and American troops, displaying an array of powerful firearms, and a small band of cutthroats has the Battle of Manila Bay written all over it. It will probably not remain an acoustic war but will lead to bloodshed. That does not make it any less farcical. The Armed Forces of the Philippines cannot solve a problem like the Abu Sayyaf, it should shoot itself in the head, not bring foreign troops to do that for the country.

As it was more than a century ago, more and more American troops are coming to the Philippines, and even more are expected to come, to reinforce the ones that are already here. That alone should dispel the notion they are here only—if at all—to fight the Abu Sayyaf, and will disappear as soon as the Abu Sayyaf does. They of course do not represent an occupation force, for the benefit of the literal-minded, who may object to the parallel. But they do represent occupation in quite another sense, which is the conversion of the country into an American theater of military operations. As it stands now, it is hard to see how they can be stopped from building a naval base in the south, and making the country a staging ground for military action in the Middle East and elsewhere. Short of monumental national outrage.

Which brings me to the one respect where our situation today is unlike the one during Mabini's time. Which is that then, the Filipino leadership was united in protesting the American intrusion into Philippine affairs, being merely powerless to stop it. Today, it's the very leadership that's united in inviting it, though being in a position to stop it, or at least to try mightily to do it. Even those who initially opposed Ms Macapagal, who not quite incidentally is not unlike Aguinaldo in having usurped power, have pretty much caved in. It's only the people that made both Edsas happen that continue to protest it.

Those who do not read their history are not just condemned to repeat it. They are condemned to repeat it—farcically.

* * *

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Teamwork led to Pentagon leader's capture

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE CAPTURE of Faisal Marohombsar, the suspected leader of the notorious Pentagon gang, was largely due to the excellent sleuthing undertaken by what Army Chief Jaime de los Santos termed "inter-service coordination." In other words, teamwork.

The tracking down of Marohombsar was begun by the Army's 6th Division under Brig. Gen. Roy Kyamko, based in South Cotabato where the bandit group is operating. When the bandit leader and his cohorts fled Mindanao for Manila, police elements under the National Anti-Crime Commission under PNP Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane took over and finally cornered them in a Quiapo hotel.

As I had earlier stated, there is no substitute for solid intelligence work. Close coordination between the AFP and the PNP doubtless was also helped by the fact that De los Santos and PNP Chief Leandro Mendoza are both from the Philippine Military Academy's Class '69. What also helped, according to Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita, is the fact that many Muslims themselves led the intelligence operatives to the whereabouts of Marohombsar. The Muslims themselves are tired of banditry, opined Ermita and long for peace in Mindanao, too. I agree.

* * *

I must confess that I have never enjoyed seeing photos of those "boodle fights" in the military portraying officers and soldiers all eating with their bare hands oftentimes with dignitaries such as the President of the land. My distaste for those photos probably comes from the fact that they invariably show them with all the food nearly spilling out of their hands and from the side of their mouths, which is so unflattering. Take that photo last Saturday in the Inquirer's front page showing Col. Jovenal Narcise eating with his hands together with some American GIs; they all looked terrible because their mouths were all stuffed. Never mind the Americans, they don't know how to eat with their hands; but Narcise should know better.

Eating with one's hand is traditional in many parts of Asia, and is here to stay. Even the upper classes at times like to eat with their hands, especially if it's *tuyo* and *sinangag*, as well as seafood on the beaches and in picnics. But definitely there is a proper way to eat with one's hand, and this is to put all the fingers together in a kind of bud, with just enough food to fill the space formed; putting more than this into the hand and the mouth looks bad and quite piggy. The military personnel always like to be photographed eating with their hands in the "boodle fight" but they ought to do it right, as doing it the wrong way is a disservice to a native tradition.

* * *

The Speaker of the House's lady, Gina de Venecia, celebrated her 52nd birthday last Feb. 15 with a luncheon at her Dasmariñas Village residence that drew perhaps the biggest concentration of women power per square inch in this country. In the dining room Gina entertained President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Mila Drilon, wife of Senate President Franklin Drilon, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Cabinet spouses such as Cecile Alvarez and Lovely Romulo, and innumerable members of the Congressional Spouses Foundation. The only one missing was Second Lady Ruth Guingona, who happened to be hosting another lunch herself (the Vice President arrived much later and feasted on the paella). Sitting among the high-powered ladies and looking every bit overwhelmed were Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate Chief Drilon. At one point during the picture-taking, as all the women crowded around them to pose, JDV was seen raising both hands and telling President Macapagal, "Ms President, surrender *na kami ni* Drilon sa women power. We are overpowered." President Macapagal looked quite amused as she surveyed the boisterous scene.

* * *

Women power is what Gina has proposed to harness to help clean up dirty Metro Manila, which she termed "Linis Para sa Kinabukasan." Wives of active and retired PNP and AFP officers, led by Erlinda Villanueva, wife of AFP Chief of Staff Diomedio Villanueva and Soledad Mendoza, wife of PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza, and a number of congressional spouses, such as Louie Locsin, wife of Makati Rep. Teddyboy Locsin; Vicky Ablan, wife of Ilocos Rep. Roquito Ablan; Nikki Teodoro, wife of Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro; and Dr. Pacita Gonzalez, wife of Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez, gathered at Minggoy's restaurant in Ortigas, Pasig last Valentine's Day lunch for a reunion, with Gina de Venecia as guest of honor. Pinch-hitting for President Macapagal, who was to be the special guest (she happened to be hosting a luncheon at the Palace then), was her sister-in-law, Mariter Jalandoni-Macapagal, who promised to be the group's bridge to Malacañang for the project. I was summoned to the reunion by my very *sosyal* "mistah," Dolly Nazareno, wife of the first PNP Director General Cesar Nazareno, and I was glad to come, as there are many friends I hadn't seen in years.

* * *

Gina told the group about her idea of involving those prominent women in clean-up projects in the metropolis, and if they are successful, they could expand their activities to other areas of the country. Gina's idea of a clean-up project for Metro Manila is most laudable, as it is urgent: note all the garbage still strewn around and the sidewalk grass that need to be cut, especially in Quezon City. The beauty of involving these powerful women is that they are very much in a position to pester the officials who have these responsibilities, for as President Macapagal herself described them, they are "the power behind the power." In other words, these high-powered women could well be a very effective *kulit* brigade.

The Maguindanao love affair with Uncle Sam

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Datu Amir Baraguir

THE AMERICAN presence in Zamboanga hoisted another line that divides this republic into at least two political blocs. In Luzon and Visayas, there seems to be a neat distribution of pro- and anti-American presence. In the south, the stand of the Maguindanaoan-speaking tribes deserves close observation. Dominating the MILF, one of the secessionist groups challenging Philippine sovereignty, and holding important posts in the MNLF Misuari and 'Council-of-15' factions, their response to the Balikatan exercises can make a difference.

Situated mainly in the province of Maguindanao and some towns of North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga-Sibugay, the Maguindanaoans can make the sojourn of Uncle Sam easy or hard. Politically, at least.

Surprisingly, neither strong opposition nor support is forthcoming. Many observers expect a strong negative reaction.

But apart from sophomoric rants from coached high-school students and meek expression of reservation of "guerilla" chieftains, however, there is a general atmosphere of quietude.

The once-sovereign Maguindanao nation—at one time or another in its about 500 years of existence controlled Samboangan or what is now Zamboanga—has a long love affair with the United States. It was not all a lollipops-and-roses romance, though. In 1904-1905, Datu Ali of Salunayan, close friend of American orientalist and historian, Dr. Najeeb Saleeby, led a revolt until his death in 1905 in resistance to US anti-slavery laws.

Peter Gowing writes that when Datu Ali captured American soldiers after a skirmish in May 1904, he took care of the latter and eventually returned them to a US Army post, instead of killing them.

During the reign of her most popular monarch, Sultan Kudarat (reigned 1619-1671), Maguindanao had an alternating policy of amity and belligerence with Spain, the Netherlands and other alien powers. Then, as now, foreign policy was dictated more by economic and political exigency, rather than religious or ideological considerations.

But when America, propelled by her "Manifest Destiny" came during the twilight of Spain, the Maguindanao nation quietly acquiesced to her presence. America came, of course, at a time when Maguindanao was in no position to determine her own destiny. Suffering internal dissension, recovering from partial colonization by Spain, ravaged by economic dislocation due to the rise of neighboring Jolo and Manila to importance in international trade, her attitude came as a matter of course.

At the close of the 1850s, there were no less than 13 sultans all vying for suzerainty of Maguindanao. This was the atmosphere when Sultan Kudarat II (reigned 1830-1854) decided to cede some of his territories to Spain in exchange for Spanish aid to stabilize his rule over the kingdom. About five decades later, the Americans came. The Sultanate of Maguindanao was vacant at the time after the death of Sultan Jalaluddin Pablo (reigned 1884-1888). Rajah Putri, daughter of Sultan Kudarat II and wife of the famous Datu Utto of Buayan apparently held it in regency.

On Nov. 16, 1899, when the Americans under the command of Gen. John C. Bates landed in Zamboanga, Datu Mangigin (who was to become sultan of Maguindanao in 1906) was domiciled in nearby Sibugay in semi-retirement. One of Mangigin's earliest official acts when he assumed the sultanate was to issue an order forbidding all datus from harassing the Americans. In the Maguindanaoan capital (now Cotabato City) the most important person was Piang or Amai Mingka, known among the Americans as "Datto Pian," who welcomed Uncle Sam's presence.

In Nuling (now Sultan Kudarat municipality, adjacent to Cotabato City), the children and grandchildren of Sultan Kudarat II placidly waited and watched.

Among them were Datu Mastura, who in 1926 became sultan and his royal son Datu Mamadra who was appointed by the Americans as the first president of the municipal district of Nuling. There also resided Datu Anwaruddin Utto, son-in-law of Sultan Kudarat II who, only a few decades earlier, was the de facto overlord of Maguindanao until he capitulated to Spanish Gen. Emilio Terrero on March 10, 1887 and his aging wife (Kudarat II's daughter) Rajah Putri.

All in all, there was an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence, it seemed.

During the early period of American rule, all Maguindanaoan persons of significance and importance immortalized their high regard for Uncle Sam by signing the Cotabato Memorial, expressing the most friendly sentiments for America though subtly asserting their wish for more autonomy.

When America was on the verge of granting independence to the Philippines, many Maguindanaoan leaders voiced their desire to remain under American rule.

They opined that Americans are more benevolent than Filipinos. Datu Mandi of Zamboanga and Datu Piang of Cotabato, both non-royal datus led that pro-American campaign.

When the Japanese came to Maguindanao, some of the datus sided with them for political exigency. That is, to save their civilian populace from massacre. But on the whole, the Maguindanaoans staunchly fought Uncle Sam's war for democracy on her own soil.

Among the Maguindanaoan leaders in America's war versus Japan were Datu Salipada K. Pendatun, Datu Udtog Matalam, Datu Mantil Dilangalen and countless others.

Today, more than 102 years after Bates' Marines, Americans are in "Samboangan" once more. What is the attitude of the once-sovereign nation of Maguindanao? By all indications, she couldn't care less. Or she must be relishing, albeit silently, the prospect of Uncle Sam's "benevolent rule."

Ecumenism for a flawed democracy

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

THE ENDLESS conflict involving ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, like the Muslims in Mindanao needs a better explanation of what is wrong. It can't all just be lawlessness and criminality that accounts for the unbroken series of revolts, uprisings and secessionist movements in Mindanao since Spanish times.

Perhaps the manifestations, like the Abu Sayyaf, can be reduced to kidnap-for-ransom banditry, or even terrorism, but the roots are made of sterner stuff and must grow in some daily perpetrated injustice or tyranny. This is preferable to the conclusion that Muslims of the Philippines are just simply prone to violent acts of criminality, with no underlying reason, no just cause, and throughout history, have comported themselves in only senseless mayhem.

My own attempt to answer the question of "root causes" in the modern era is this: *Unbroken, unconstitutional religious discrimination and cultural segregation, condoned and perpetuated by every government since 1946, gives minorities every reason to prefer secession or independence, and to fight for them.* Muslim Mindanao is our very own East Timor. The Muslims are our American Indians. They are the Negroes of our unrepentant constitutional conscience. Mindanao is the flaw that gives the lie to our democracy and mocks our proclaimed dedication to the Constitution.

It all began with the Spaniards, (as we always say), who carried to these shores their crusades against the Moorish ("Moro") Muslims. Conversion to Roman Catholicism was the only alternative to annihilation offered by the *frailes* and the *conquistadores*. No wonder they met with resistance, violent and otherwise. But much good was also done by the Spanish. It is wrong to portray those centuries as being wholly evil. The individual compassion of men and the dedication of missionaries shaped our history as much as the worst things that could be said about Spanish colonialism and theocracy.

Filipinos did unite in the Revolution and the Philippine-American War, but they met an America very different from what it is today. When the 20th century was new, America was fresh from a shameful epoch of its history in the American Indian Wars. As *indios* we may have been treated no better. The harshest critics say that the United States effectively had a genocidal policy against the Native American Indians. Those peoples were utterly destroyed when the West was won. In the Indian Wars, the Indians lost their traditional ancestral domains to white settlers. The Indians were put into reservations, (concentration camps really), where poverty and alcoholism demolished the last vestiges of their ancient pride. (In an odd twist, several Indian tribes have recently become the proprietors of vastly successful gambling casinos, the result of some smart lawyers' discovery in the '80s of a loophole in treaties covering their reservations. The Red Man may find some restitution on the green felt of the gaming tables, though they will never recover their lost civilization. But they'll have world-class museums extolling a tragically vanished glory.)

Only with the black civil rights movements of the mid-20th century, which were supported by people of every race and color in America, would the American government truly begin to redress the historic wrongs perpetrated on racial and other minorities, like women and immigrants.

By contrast, imperial Manila has not yet undertaken the genuine unification of all cultures and religions under truly democratic governance. The effective state religion of Spanish times, survived the transition into democracy. The Philippine Church became merely the accepted mistress of the State, whose wife, the Constitution, suffers in silence, as long as her husband maintains civility in public about their relationship and the legitimate family of Filipinos. The illicit dalliance is never far below the surface and shows in myriad ways. Yet all the children acquiesce to the arrangements of convenience.

This is the greatest historic challenge to the Philippine Church, our unofficial State religion: to break the illicit relationship as mistress to a family man, whose duty it is to safeguard and defend the rights of all his children. Thus, it is to the Church that I address this call—that it work to remove the symbols that hurt all our non-Catholic brethren, Muslims, lumads, Iglesia ni Cristos, Aglipayans, Protestants, Buddhists, even atheists. I refer to profane Masses in national government offices; chapels at military camps exclusively for Catholics (others must walk kilometers outside to worship); and all the culpable and obvious, violations of the Constitution that disunite our nation. The Church should lead an ecumenical movement to right this democracy.

My greatest disappointment is that Pope John Paul II's historic apologies to all those wronged by the Church and his calls for atonement have been ignored and disregarded by the Philippine bishops. But I have not lost hope in the Catholic Church. She has many sincere, earnest, sacrificing, loving people, who will surely be in the front ranks of the righteous when the battle is joined to rectify our democracy by enforcing the neutrality demanded of the government by the Constitution, and the ecumenism urged upon us by that conscience which belongs to all religions.

* * *

Comments to deanjbocobo@yahoo.com

Outdated photo

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

AT A TIME when colored photos are considered standard fare in the country's newspapers, sepia photos (or those produced in brown pigment) stand out like sore thumbs.

These photos are considered museum pieces. They are used primarily to illustrate life before the late '60s or before Kodak came up with the technology that enabled films to capture the exact color of their subjects.

If movie or television films want to do a flashback of past events, the color that dominates the scenes is sepia or any color close to it so the viewer is put on notice that he is watching something that happened before.

A reader, Arnulfo Estabillora of Navotas City, caught the Inquirer using a sepia photo for a news report that had nothing to do with the good old days. The photo stood out in a page that had color all over it except that one particular picture.

He wrote: "This is about your story today (Feb. 13) headlined 'Aglipay transfers protesting cop' which carried the picture of Gen. Edgar Aglipay, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office. This is not a complaint, but just an observation about the photo of General Aglipay that you used.

"I think that was a very old photo of him, perhaps, when he was still a low-ranking police official. Even the color of the photo is sepia which shows that it was taken several years ago when there were still no colored photos.

"Are you trying to make General Aglipay look young by using his old photo? This is not the first time you used old photos for your news subjects. In the past, I spotted similar cases of using old photos. This is very unfair to the subjects of your news.

"Old photos inaccurately present the picture of a news subject. It shows lack of diligence on your part. I am sure you have a chestful of photos of government officials, like General Aglipay. It does not look good for the most widely read newspaper in the country to be careless in the choice of pictures."

Wrong photo

The news that carried Aglipay's photo was about his order transferring SPO1 Antonio Emmanuel, vice president of Manila's Finest Brotherhood Association Inc., from his post at Manila to the headquarters of the Philippine National Police Traffic Enforcement Group in Makati City.

The order was being protested by Emmanuel's fellow police officers as irregular since it came shortly after the latter complained about Aglipay's alleged refusal to comply with a National Police Commission order banning the transfer of Manila policemen to other units due to minor administrative infractions.

Aglipay's photo was placed beside the news to give the readers an idea of how he looks. Indeed, as correctly pointed out by the reader, his photo was in vintage sepia—brown and was grainy. He wore a cap that had olive branches on its band and visor. Not the press-on half cap that police officers now use.

He looked several years younger than what he appears to be, as seen on television. This is not to say that the Aglipay of today looks more elderly, but it is apparent the photo was taken when he was still a spring chicken. It could pass as a poster model for cosmetic surgeons who cater to the people who are still in search of the fountain of youth.

What further confirmed the age of the photo was what appeared at the background to be an OB van of ABS-CBN that used a logo that had long been phased out by the giant broadcasting station.

The editor in chief agreed with the reader's observation that a more recent photo of Aglipay should have been used for that particular news report. Aglipay has been the subject of numerous reports and photos, alone and with other fellow police officials, for years dating back to the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos. The databank of the photographers will not be wanting on his latest photos.

For this reason, the Inquirer apologizes for the erroneous choice of Aglipay's photo. The attention of the editor concerned has been called by the editor in chief to prevent a repeat of the incident.

This is just an aside and has no bearing on the apology just made. If the readers think that some of the photos published by the Inquirer, especially those that appear in the Lifestyle and entertainment sections, are not "true, genuine and honest," the newspaper should not be accused of misrepresentation. The photos are usually supplied by their subjects and, not surprisingly, they show their best angles, after deducting three or five years.

Positive news

A long-time reader of the newspaper, Rene Banaag of Arellano University, wrote to make what he considers "one heartfelt request." His comments cover not only the Inquirer but other media outlets as well.

From his perspective, he thinks "there is a new culture pervading in our society and it is the culture of fault-finding, bellyaching and impatience. Gone are the days when people are more civil and values-oriented. The print media is not doing anything about it, it seems.

"Is it possible that the Inquirer could initiate a new mind-set or a recovery program for all of us? I hope you could lead the way to enhance the strengths of people more than their weaknesses. How about the opportunities rather than portraying all the threats?

"There are a lot of advantages also that can be printed instead of disadvantages, more good news instead of publishing so much bad news. Any positive feedback from you?"

Positive news, or news that makes the readers feel good after reading, has been the subject of numerous discussions by the editors in their regular Monday editorial assessment meeting.

While most of the editors think the newspaper should report the news as it happens regardless of who gets hurt in the process, they have no beef against reporting on a daily basis news that shows the lighter, happier or more amusing side of life.

It is not a coincidence that every day the front page of the Inquirer carries a news item that has a wacky touch, or deals with something unusual yet entertaining, or shows that the human race is still worth saving in spite of its mistakes and shortcomings.

In my conversations with the editors and reporters, I learned that it is not easy to come up with positive news stories considering the social, political and economic problems the country is going through at present. But as the Sunday editions of the newspaper will show, there are enough human-interest stories available that reassure us that there is much to be thankful for in spite of all those problems.

If the readers know of anecdotes or incidents that can enhance the strengths of our people, or highlight the opportunities that await the industrious and optimistic, or make challenges out of problems, why not share those stories with the newspaper so the public can take inspiration from them?

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

LETTERS

Correct all our error-riddled textbooks

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And perhaps an anecdote involving Abraham Lincoln best illustrates the attitude that we would take on these matters. Once petitioned by a delegation to support the abolition of cockfighting, Lincoln, being a highly principled statesman, reasoned out: "As long as the Almighty permits intelligent men, created in His image and likeness, to fight in public and kill each other while the world looks on approvingly, it's not for me to deprive chickens of the same privilege."—**JULIO MANALO CUETO, 1720 Diamond Rd., Perlas Compound, Kumintang Ilaya, Batangas City 4200**

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This figure simply tells us that we are losing about 100 tamaraws a year for the last 100 years.

If we do not act now, we will just wake up one day to find the tamaraws gone forever like the dinosaurs.—**PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court, Malanday, Marikina City**

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Mendoza does not have a monopoly of intelligence, competence and dedication to service. Those who are next in line are equally men of integrity, proficiency and commitment. Anyone among them is good enough to head the PNP and lead the campaign to maintain peace and order.

Mendoza has had his time. He should not deprive his successor the opportunity to serve the country and the Filipino people.—**CAROLINA SANSUAT-SY, 334 Consolacion St., Valenzuela, Metro Manila**

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Swivelling 2nd row seat	✓	—	—	—
AUDIOVOX (USA) VCD with TV	✓	—	—	—
2-tone body colors	✓	—	—	✓
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AUDIOVOX (USA) VCD w/ LCD TV	✓	—	—	—
Side mirrors w/ demister	✓	—	—	—
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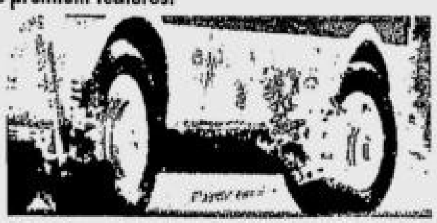

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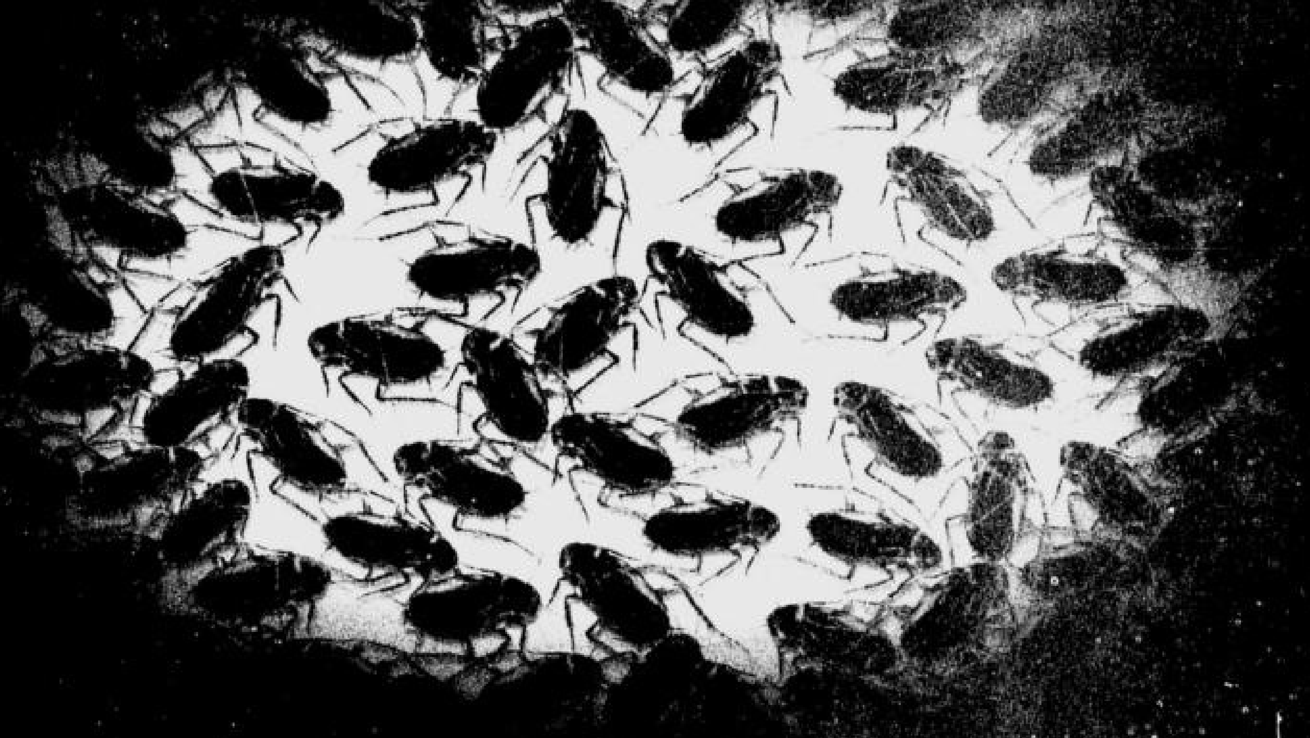

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Taliban leader Omar hiding in mountains, Afghan official says

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—Fugitive Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar is holed up in a remote mountainous region in central Afghanistan, a Kandahar government official said on Saturday.

"We have had certain indications," engineer Mohammad Yusuf Pashtoon, a senior aide to Kandahar Gov. Gul Agha Sherzai, told reporters. "He is still in the same place. We believe he is in the northwestern part of Uruzgan."

Mullah Omar escaped Kandahar in December before the city fell, and Afghanistan's new interim government is trying to track him down. But finding him in Uruzgan, a region of rugged mountains and few roads, is no easy task.

"There are major problems. One problem is communications.

Also, the terrain and weather are making our efforts more difficult," Pashtoon said.

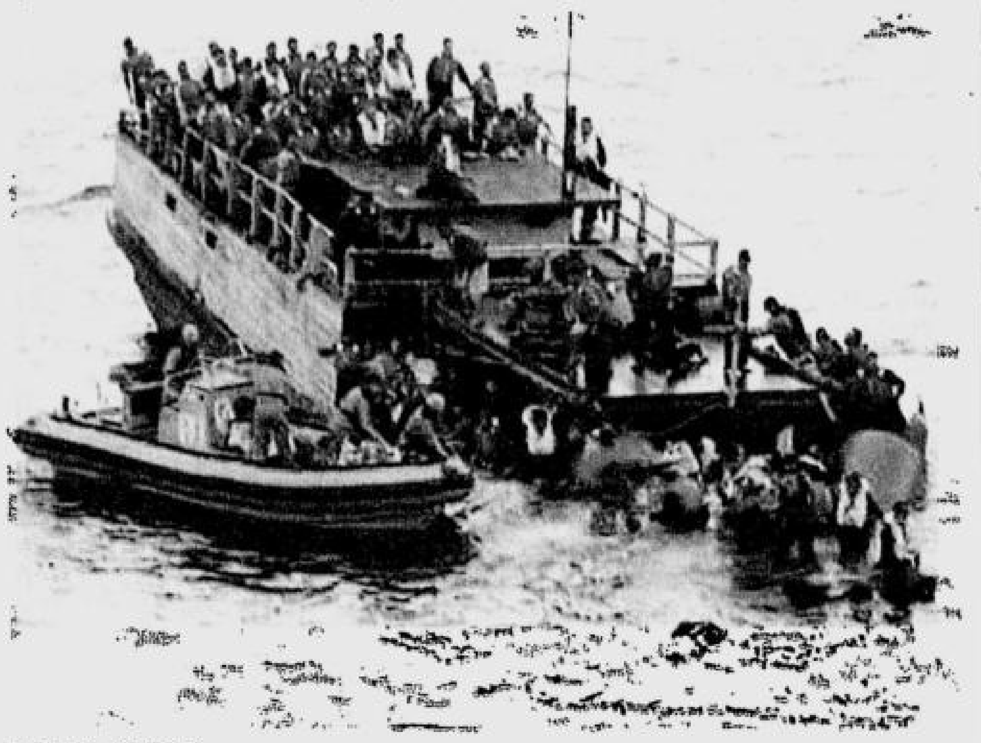
He said the Afghan authorities were relying on local intelligence to track Mullah Omar, and that, to his knowledge, no US forces were in Uruzgan to hunt for the reclusive, one-eyed Taliban leader.

The search for Mullah Omar, and for his "guest" Osama bin Laden, accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, is the main piece of unfinished business for the US and Afghan forces that routed the Taliban.

Kandahar government officials said last week that more than 15 senior Taliban leaders were in talks on their possible surrender. Taliban Foreign Minister Mullah Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil gave himself up earlier this month and is being questioned by US forces in Kandahar.

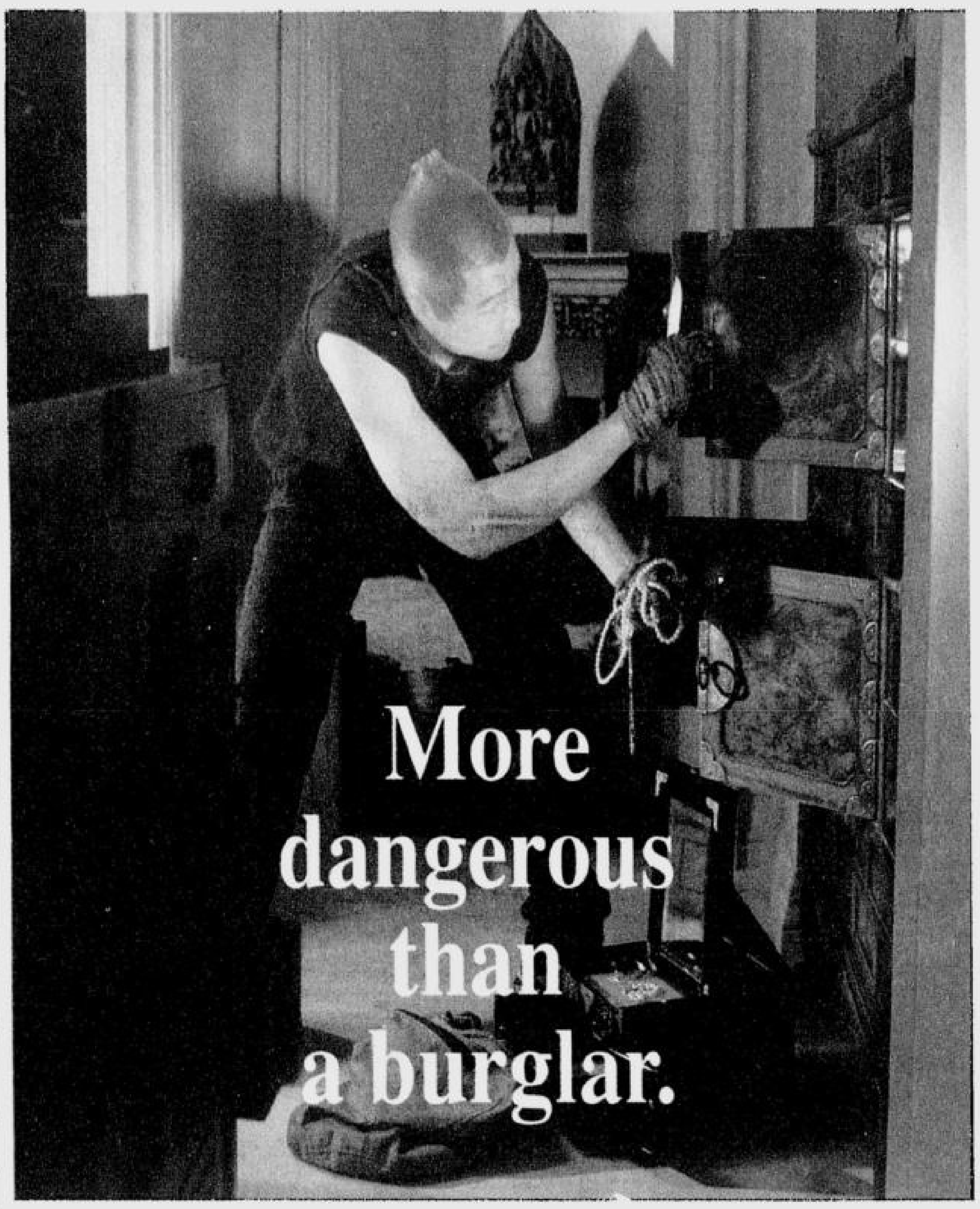
Pashtoon said negotiations with other senior Taliban figures were still under way.

Reuters



FALSE CLAIM REUTERS

Australian navy personnel rescue asylum seekers from a sinking boat off Christmas Island in October 2001. The Australian government came under attack Feb. 17 over its assertion that asylum seekers threw their children overboard in an effort to stay in Australia. The government campaigned heavily on its anti-boatpeople stance at last year's election, but two government reports to parliament last week revealed its claim of children being thrown overboard off Christmas Island was false.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867-9797

Afghan minister buried; security force attacked

KABUL—Assassinated Afghan minister Abdul Rahman was buried on Saturday as fresh violence in the capital raised new fears about the country's fragile security.

Several hundred troops, their rifles fitted with bayonets, escorted the coffin carrying the body of the interim government's air transport and tourism minister, whose killing the country's leadership said was plotted by senior government officials.

Interim leader Hamid Karzai, who led a somber funeral procession, said: "This event again proves that we need to save ourselves from the oppression of the gun and the force of the knife."

The murder, an attack on international peacekeepers on Saturday and chaos outside a soccer match in Kabul on Friday, underscored the problems facing Afghanistan's UN-backed interim government as it struggles to reconcile rival factions and rebuild a volatile nation recovering from years of war.

The interim government took power in December after an American-led military campaign succeeded in overthrowing the hard-line Islamic Taliban regime that harbored the al-Qaida militant network of Osama bin Laden, blamed for the Sept. 11 attacks on America.

In the capital, Kabul, an observation post of the International Security Assistance Force manned by British soldiers came under fire from unidentified gunmen early on Saturday.

The British paratroopers returned fire and the gunmen sped away in a vehicle, international security force chief of staff Col. Richard Barons told reporters. No paratroopers were wounded and they evacuated the post.

The attack was the first against the 17-nation force of around 4,000 deployed in late December to help maintain security in Kabul. The first contingent of Turkish troops arrived on Saturday to join the force.

In the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, one aid worker has been wounded by gunmen and another may have been kidnapped as armed bands undermine security.

Aid officials said a senior Afghan employee of the UN children's agency UNICEF was shot and wounded on Saturday in a struggle with gunmen who burst into his house and tried to kidnap him.

Another Afghan official with British aid group FOCUS was missing, believed kidnapped on Thursday while walking to work.

Old tribal and ethnic rivalries have resurfaced and exploded in bloodshed in some places while aid agencies warn that a rising tide of crime is threatening their efforts to help the war-shattered country's millions of destitute.

Three government officials are suspected of involvement in the death of Rahman, the aviation minister who was once a senior figure in the Northern Alliance which now dominates the interim government, but who later switched his allegiance to Afghanistan's former king, Zahir Shah.

Reuters

Hopes for breakthrough in Pearl kidnapping dim

KARACHI, Pakistan—A hoped-for breakthrough in the kidnapping of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl slipped away Saturday after police reached the home of a key suspect minutes too late, officials said.

Police were holding the suspect's two brothers in an attempt to flush him out, said Tariq Jamil, deputy police chief in the southern port city of Karachi. The country's interior minister announced two more arrests but gave no further details.

Meanwhile, the question of whether Pearl is alive remained unanswered.

Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the British-born militant who surrendered and confessed to the abduction, told a court here Thursday that he believed the 38-year-old journalist was dead. But authorities remain skeptical, saying there's no evidence to back Saeed's claim.

Pakistani security forces were focusing their efforts Saturday on a different Muslim extremist, identified as Mansour Hussain, who they believe seized Pearl on instructions from Saeed.

Tracing mobile phone calls led police to a house where Hussain was hiding in Karachi but he fled shortly before police raided it, Jamil said. In addition to detaining his two brothers, police picked up Hussain's wife and child but later released them. Pakistani security forces often detain suspects' family members to get them to surrender.

Police in the eastern state of Punjab arrested two more suspects in the case Saturday, said Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider. He said two FBI agents helped in those arrests.

Several other people were detained in the Karachi area overnight and are being detained for questioning, police said.

Jamil said that Saeed's interrogation has been frustrating.

"We are not very encouraged by the replies we are getting from him so far. At times he has tried to mislead us," Jamil said.

Pearl's abduction has been a major embarrassment for Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who's been trying to dispel his country's image as a center of Islamic extremism in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. He went to Washington last week and received kudos for his decision to ally Pakistan with the US war effort in Afghanistan—in addition to promises of economic aid.

AP

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Suicide bombing kills 2 teeners; Israel launches retaliatory strike

NABLUS, West Bank—A Palestinian suicide bombing that killed two Israeli teenagers in a Jewish settlement drew a retaliatory Israeli air strike on Sunday against Palestinian Authority targets in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Ahead of the weekly Israeli Cabinet meeting, right-wing politicians called for a stronger military response to a surge in violence that has further lowered hopes for an end to more than 16 months of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed.

On the other side of the Israeli political debate, an estimated 14,000 people gathered in Tel Aviv on Saturday night for a rally organized by the leftist Peace Now movement. They urged Israel to pull out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Nablus was hit before dawn, just hours after a Palestinian bomber strapped with nail-studded explosives blew himself up outside a pizzeria in a crowded shopping center in the nearby settlement of Karnei Shomron on Saturday night.

The bomber died in the blast along with two Israelis—a 14-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy. Medical officials said at least 20 people were wounded, six of them seriously.

Witnesses in Nablus said warplanes and helicopter gunships carried out the attacks which severely damaged a Palestinian Authority building, a police compound and offices reserved for President Yasser Arafat during his visits.

There were no reports of casualties. Palestinians usually evacuate official facilities after anti-Israeli attacks, anticipating Israeli retaliation.

"The Israeli Defense Forces struck several Palestinian Authority targets in the wake of continuing murderous terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens and soldiers," the army said in a statement on the Nablus air raid.

Mahmoud Al-Aloul, governor of the Palestinian-ruled city, condemned the aerial assault as a "dangerous escalation."

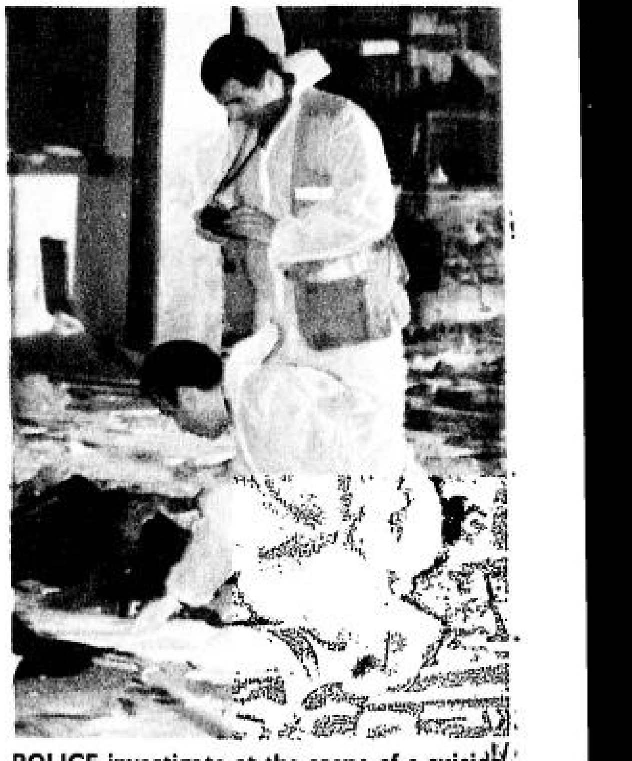
The suicide bombing in Karnei Shomron took place just hours after German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, following a meeting with Arafat, said the situation was deteriorating from "bad to worse" and appealed for an immediate ceasefire.

The explosion in the outdoor shopping center sprayed body parts, half-eaten food and debris across its stone plaza. Blood splattered the pavement and store facades were shattered.

"I got out of my car and ran to the site and saw a body in the pizzeria and chunks of human flesh all over. It was the bomber's body," said Ron Agunar, 17.

It was the first time a suicide bomber had caused such carnage in one of the heavily guarded settlements in the West Bank during the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.

The bomber's family identified him as Sadek Abdel-Hafez, a 20-year-old mechanic from the town of Qalqilya, and said the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine told them he belonged to the group. *Reuters*



POLICE investigate at the scene of a suicide bomb blast in a shopping mall in the Karnei Shomron settlement Feb. 16. REUTERS

Enron's Lay sold shares after warning

WASHINGTON—Former Enron Corp. Chair Kenneth Lay sold $100 million in company stock last year, including a large portion sold back to Enron after an employee warned him about an accounting debacle, a newspaper reported on Saturday.

Lay disclosed the sales in a filing this week with the Securities and Exchange Commission, The New York Times said.

A spokesperson for Lay confirmed the sale on Saturday but said the transactions were motivated by a desire to pay off personal loans rather than a lack of confidence in Enron's future.

The sales included $20 million of shares sold in the three weeks after Sherron S. Watkins, an Enron official, warned Lay that the energy trading giant was in danger of collapsing "in a wave of accounting scandals."

The Houston-based company, once America's seventh-biggest, unraveled last year amid allegations it misled investors about its finances while top executives reaped huge profits by selling their holdings. Enron's collapse threw thousands out of work and wiped out many workers' retirement savings.

"Mr. Lay relinquished shares of Enron stock last year to help repay his loans," Kelly Kimberly, a spokesperson for Lay, said in a telephone interview from Houston.

"The vast majority of the proceeds were used to repay lines of credit collateralized with Enron stock," Kimberly said, adding that the stock value had "significantly diminished."

Kimberly said she could not confirm reports that Lay's stock sales were valued at $100 million. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Church sex scandal

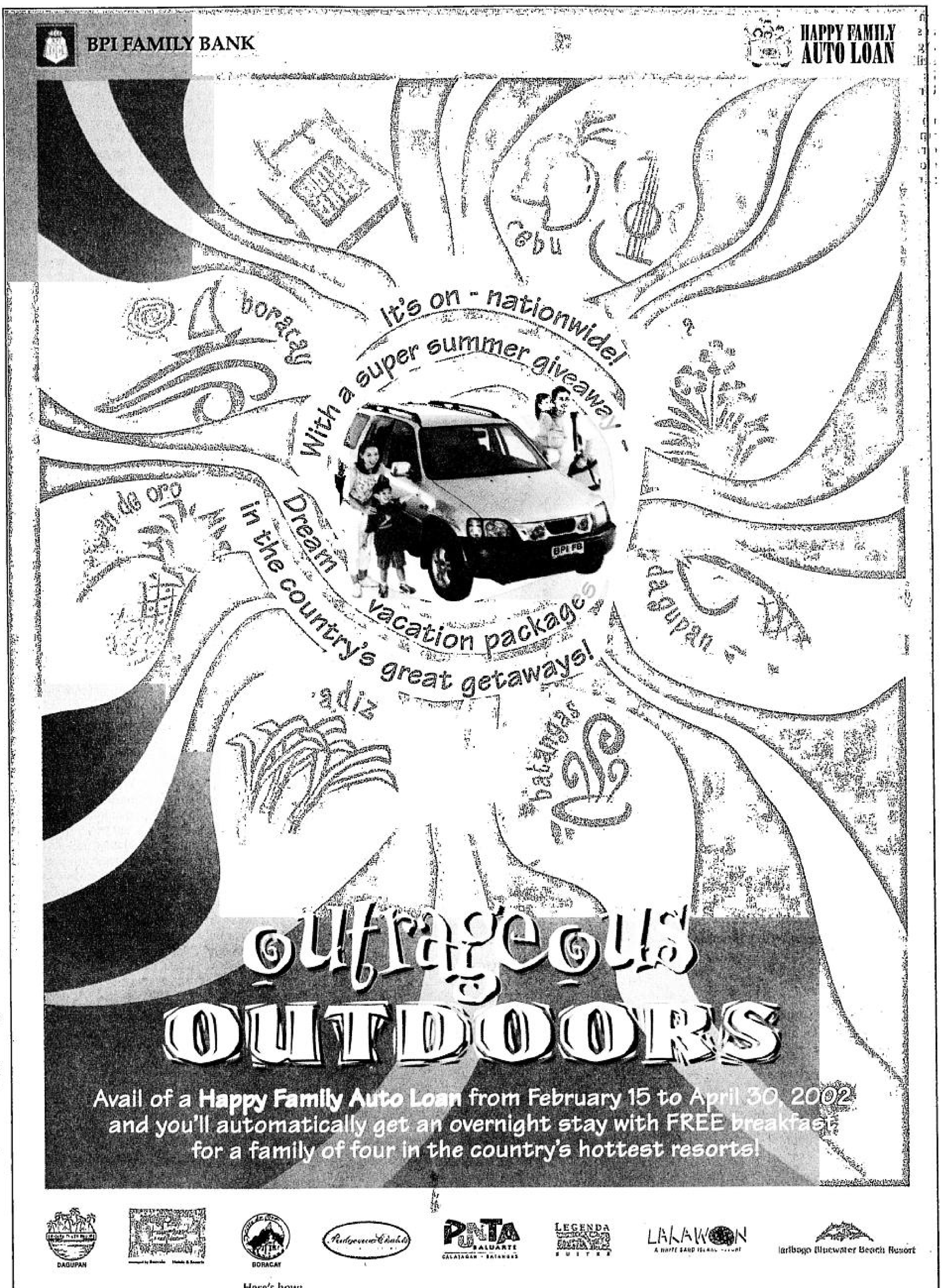
BOSTON—Roman Catholic officials removed seven priests from their diocese Saturday after making public a list of 14 priests accused of sexually abusing children between the late 1960s and 1987. "It is hopeful that our Church and community will know that no priest is now serving in ministry who has, to out knowledge, engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor," said John McCormack, bishop of New Hampshire, in a written statement. On Friday, McCormack released the names of 14 priests accused of sexually abusing children at the request of the attorney general in the northeastern US state of New Hampshire. An investigation by The Boston Globe revealed that several judges had kept such cases off their dockets and sealed the files from public scrutiny after defense attorneys convinced them that publicity would jeopardize the Roman Catholic Church. *AFP*

Bodies found in Georgia

NOBLE, Georgia—Dozens of decomposing corpses were found stacked in storage sheds and scattered in woods outside a crematory, and authorities arrested the operator. Some of the bodies were in coffins that appeared to have been buried and disinterred. When investigators asked 28-year-old Ray Brent Marsh why the bodies weren't cremated, he told them the crematory incinerator wasn't working, Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokesperson John Bankhead said. "The worst horror movie you've ever seen—imagine that 10 times worse," Walker County Coroner Dewayne Wilson said. "That is what I'm dealing with." Officials said the number of bodies found could be in the hundreds. They broke off the search of the woods Saturday night and planned to resume Sunday morning. "All we know for sure right now are the 80 bodies, and 13 of those have been identified," Bankhead said. "But they've found so many other partial skeletal remains and evidence of graves, we don't know how many more are out there." *AP*

TB in rich countries

OSAKA—Tuberculosis, long considered a disease of the Third World, is making a comeback in industrial countries partly due to rising immigration, TB experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Sunday. Increased numbers of immigrants and refugees, rising drug use and—in Japan's case in particular—an aging population, all point to problems ahead for rich countries as well as poor, said WHO officials at a tuberculosis (TB) conference in Osaka. TB, caused by an airborne bacteria spread by coughing and other personal contact, was once a leading killer in the industrial world but became rare when antibiotics were introduced. In poorer countries, however, the number of cases has reached epidemic proportions and about two million people around the world die of TB every year. *Reuters*



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HOY ULIT! GANDA KASAMA NATIN AH!
SI MA'AM BA TALAGA IYAN??

EV ESPIRITU

ONE of the controversial "Uncle Bobo" streamers hangs along Loakan Road during the PMA Alumni Homecoming on Sunday.

PMA alumni get flak from 'Uncle Bobo'

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—"Uncle Bobo," the Philippine Military Academy's anonymous critic of the 1950s, returned to haunt this year's PMA Alumni Homecoming—stalking "erring alumni members" after years of absence with streamers that bore sarcastic yet conscientious reminders about the academy's time-honored values.

"Uncle Bobo" was created by the late Gen. Eugene Ocampo Jr., a member of Class 1958, and was sustained for some years by anonymous cadets "as a satiric foil for academy issues and contemporary scandals that affected the cadets," said retired Gen. Ramon Montaño of PMA Class 1958.

"In fact, when our class started it, Uncle Bobo dug at all issues and was rarely cynical. It was just fun, even with the death of its creator in a 1987 helicopter crash," Montaño explained.

But he said "Uncle Bobo" disappeared when the Reform the Armed Forces Movement dominated the military scene, following the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

On Sunday morning, more than 1,000 PMA alumni and their families were surprised to find 10 streamers, penned by a new "Uncle Bobo," which were hung along Loakan Road, the main route to and from the PMA.

Most of the streamers were taunting. "*Ikaw ba ay tunay na PMAyer* (Are you a genuine PMAyer)?" one streamer reads, followed later by the more punchy "*Burado na ba ang* Courage, Integrity and Loyalty *sa* bullring *mo* (Is the PMA motto Courage, Integrity and Loyalty already scraped off your class bullring)?"

The anonymous critic's "return" quickly became the hottest conversation piece of reuniting alumni members. Among those who attended the affair were Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes (Class 1966); Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva (1968), AFP Southern Command chief, Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu (1970); Philippine National Police chief, Director General Leandro Mendoza; former PNP spokesperson Director Thompson Lantion (1969); and Central Luzon police director, Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya (1969).

Also present were National Security Adviser Roilo Golez (1970), Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita (1957) and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon (1961).

The oldest PMA alumnus who attended the affair was retired Col. Pedro Gonzales, 88, of PMA Class 1938, while the youngest alumnus was 21-year-old Lt. Rey Delima of PMA Class 2001.

Alumni members had to track down all 10 streamers as they traveled through Loakan Road, a retired general admitted, "because we haven't seen any of these reminders for ages."

Lacson or Corpus?

Many PMA alumni speculated that the new "Uncle Bobo" could be an extension of the public rift between Sen. Panfilo Lacson (1971) and Intelligence Services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief, Col. Victor Corpus (1967).

To the alumni, both celebrated rivals represent the contemporary scandals and political controversies that have shadowed their alma mater, an alumnus told the INQUIRER.

Neither Lacson nor Corpus attended this year's reunion, although free copies of the Malaya newspaper, which published Lacson's PMA memoirs, were distributed here.

Most of the alumni members have read the "Uncle Bobo" streamers, except for the first streamer, which was tangled up near the Camp John Hay main gate.

Some of the messages may seem obscure to civilians: "Applicable *ba sa iyo ang* Honor Code (Is the Honor Code applicable to you)?" "*Nagmamalasakit ka ba sa kapwa mo PMAyer* (Are you compassionate about your fellow PMAyer)?" "*Hoy!* Shabby *ka ba* (Hey! Are you shabby)?"

"*Producing pa ba si* underclass *ng* skag, *kape at ebidensiya? Este T.S. pala* (Does the underclass still produce skag, coffee and evidence? Or,... T.S.)," went one streamer, prompting alumni members here to laugh.

They did not explain the references, however.

"*Hoy! Ganda kotse natin, ah! All right ba iyan* (Hey! That's a nice and expensive car! Is that all right)?" another streamer said.

"All right" is a challenge hurled at a cadet or a PMA alumnus by his colleague to elicit the truth. A lying PMA graduate should not respond with another "All right."

Lacson engaged Defense Secretary Reyes last year with the "All right" challenge during the Senate inquiry on narcopolitics—the first time the PMA phrase became a public byword.

"*Hoy ulit! Ganda kasama natin, ah! Si Ma'am ba talaga iyan* (Hey again! You're with a beautiful lady. Is that really your wife)?" the following streamer pointed out.

'Weakest link'

The very last streamer punctuated the series with a pun on a popular game show: "*Kung quibbling ka sa mga sagot mo, you are the weakest link. Goodbye* (If you quibble over your answers, then you're the weakest link. Goodbye)."

Capt. Edgard Arevalo, PMA spokesperson and a member of Class 1990, said the PMA has nothing to do with the streamers and they do not know who put these up.

"But it is a good thing. These are wake-up calls for the alumni," he said.

Barangay Loakan residents interviewed by the INQUIRER said three men began putting up the streamers before 6 p.m. on Saturday.

"The streamers refresh your mind. The PMA had been embroiled in so much contemporary issues, but this will remind us. Make us reflect," said Supt. Emmanuel Luis Licup, president of PMA Class 1977.

"But my reactions were mixed when I saw it. I felt that it should have targeted someone specifically, and should not have been generalized," he admitted.

To the PMA's original "rebels," however, the "Uncle Bobo" revival represented the "sustained idealism of the academy."

"I'm happy that the idealism is still in these younger batches (of PMA). I believe that this (Uncle Bobo revival) is being launched by younger classes, (not by Lacson nor by Corpus). We all need to review our inner values. So many of us (alumni members) have succumbed already (to corruption). And we would know. We have been very vocal. I hope the good (PMA alumni) win," said former Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, spokesperson of the RAM and a founding member of its precursor, the Reform the Armed Forces Movement.

He said "Uncle Bobo" may prove to be a valuable alternative mode of criticism for young soldiers.

"But the young alumni should learn the hard lessons of their older *mistahs*. They should learn if (Uncle Bobo) is the best way to approach changes, if the best way is violence, which may have been RAM's wrongdoing, or if the best way is to join politics and make changes in that arena," he said.

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TODO BALITA
5:00 AM
Balitaang walang humpay con todo saya.
Neil Ocampo

RADYO PATROL BALITA
7:00 AM
Ratsada ng mga pinakahuling kaganapan tinipon ng puwersa ng Radyo Patrol sa Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao.
Angelo Palmones

KORINA SA UMAGA
8:00 AM
Masinsinan at walang takot na talakayan mula sa inyong kabig at kakampi.
Korina Sanchez

ANG SAY NI MARENG WINNIE
Winnie Monsod
Makabuluhang pananaw hinggil sa mga naglalagablab na isyu.
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2 'smut' tabloids banned in Iloilo City

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Two tabloids have been on the watch list here after they were classified as "smut" and consequently confiscated from newsstands in January and early this month.

Rosalinda Poral, chair of the Task Force Adam's Apple, said that Bomba and Banat, both Tagalog tabloids, are being monitored after some of their January and February issues carried photographs of bare-breasted women, many of them showbiz startups. Of the tabloids, it was Bomba that has more of such photos splashed on its pages.

The task force, under the office of city mayor Jerry Treñas, is in charge of the campaign against drug addiction, movies, prostitution, pornography and lewd shows.

While it has not spelled out what constitutes pornography, Poral said that tabloids, with photos of naked women, should not be allowed to circulate in Iloilo City.

A meeting between the task force and major newspaper dealers and distributors was held on Jan. 9, a few days after five copies of Bomba was confiscated from newsstands. During the meeting, four representatives of newspaper dealers pledged to discontinue the sale of Bomba.

Eduardo Ty, owner of the Eddie-Mar News and Magazine Stand, even executed a waiver saying he had stopped the distribution of Bomba and Banat since Jan. 10. He promised never to circulate any "smut" magazine in the future.

But Jimmy Feliciano, a distributor of newspapers, comics and magazines, asked the task force not to confiscate copies of Bomba. He said that after he complained to Bomba's publisher, Inglewood Corp., the newspaper has toned down its contents. (Banat is published by Banat Publishing Inc.)

Feliciano, in a letter to Poral on Jan. 11, said there is a remake of the tabloid "just like any legitimate and decent tabloid in the country without the pornographic and suggestive portions." He also attached a sample of the new format.

Lawyer Lorna Laurea of the city legal office said Feliciano's request may be granted if he could show that the new Bomba no longer contains pornographic or obscene pictures and articles banned under Ordinance No. 85, which mandates the city's anti-smut campaign.

The ordinance authorizes the summary confiscation of "pornographic publications" and imposes a penalty of five months imprisonment and a P1,000-fine, city legal officer Cirilo Ganzon Jr. said.

After the confiscation, a criminal case maybe filed against a distributor.

In November last year, Task Force Adam's Apple claimed that it had stopped the circulation of "Ultimate X-pose Male Body Mag" in Iloilo city after all newspaper distributors agreed to do so.

Media vigilance urged on poachers

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Concerned individuals here have called for vigilance on the part of the media to follow the development on the prosecution of the case filed against the 95 Chinese poachers arrested in the Tubbataha Reef.

The sentiment was raised by the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (Elac) after Chinese officials talked with local officials about the case.

The non-government group, which prosecutes violators of environmental laws, feared that the case would turn into nothing if the authorities bowed to political pressure as previous experience shows.

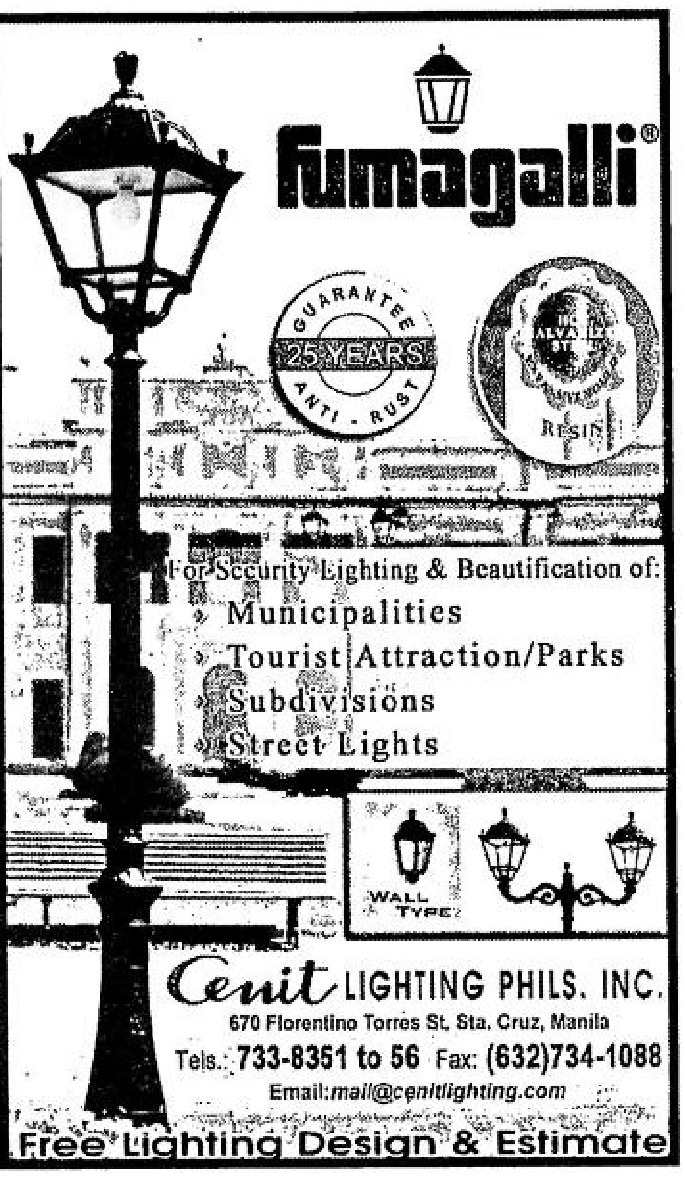
"I will not be surprised if this case against the Chinese would be dismissed or if they would be released for humanitarian reason," said Elac legal officer Dong Lorenzo.

Previous cases of Chinese intrusion in Palawan waters had been dismissed either for alleged lack of evidence or the meddling of the Department of Foreign Affairs for the release of the Chinese as a humanitarian act.

Lorenzo expressed concern over the underlying message relayed by the Chinese consulate for restraints in publicizing the issue.

The Chinese consulate has urged officials to restrain from publicizing the case as it will strain the country's relations with China. ***Ruelle Albert D. Castro, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

OUTDOOR LAMPPOST



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Mel Tiangco with some beneficiaries of Bisig Bayan.

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Hindi lang sa pag-ulat ng balita maaasahan si Mel Tiangco. Ito'y alam na alam ng ating mga kababayang natulungan na ng Bisig Bayan.

Sa outreach program na ito, kasama si Mel tumulong sa mga nangangailangan ng mga bagay tulad ng pagkain at gamot sa iba't-ibang dako ng bansa. Kahit ano pa man ang sungit ng panahon o tindi ng trahedya, ang taos-pusong pangangalaga ni Mel ay tiyak na mararamdaman.

Gaya nga ng Pharex Medicines. Tumaas man ang presyo ng bilihin o tumama man ang kung anong krisis, maaasahang mananatiling abot-kaya ang presyo ng Pharex. At umaraw man o bumagyo, mapapagkatiwalaan ang bisa at kalidad ng Pharex Medicines. Ito ang alagang Pharex.

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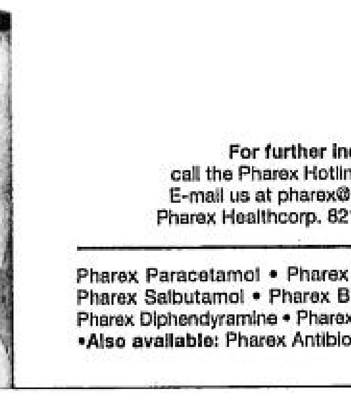
Mel Tiangco at Pharex: Alagang Maaasahan



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Sugar firm lays off 184 more workers

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The cash-strapped Victorias Milling Co. on Friday served notices of retrenchment to 184 more employees and decided to close down its St. Joseph's Hospital at the company's headquarters in Manapla, Negros Occidental.

The new wave of retrenchment, which will take effect on March 18, will bring to 563 the number of VMC employees separated this year, with 379 already retrenched in January.

VMC plans to retrench 283 more employees before the end of the year to complete the reduction of its workforce from 2,446 to 1,600.

Arthur Aguilar, VMC's chief operating officer, said the reduction of the VMC workforce is necessary for the survival of the firm.

He said the P50 million to be used for the retrenchment of the 184 employees is internally generated funds, from the company's increased production and improved operations.

The retrenchment pay is equivalent to one and a half months salary for every year of service of the affected employees.

Turn around

The P100 million paid to retrenched VMC employees last month was also internally generated, Aguilar said.

"We have operationally turned around VMC through proper checks and balances," he said.

Majority of the 184 served notices of retrenchment on Friday are personnel of the company's St. Joseph's Hospital, while the rest are employees who applied for voluntary retrenchment.

VMC is set to shut down the St. Joseph's Hospital in March, Aguilar said.

Losses

A statement from VMC said the company's management decided to shut down the hospital that has served the needs of its employees and residents of northern Negros for decades because of huge losses since 1997.

But the company will retain the VMC clinic, which will be transferred to a bigger building and will be equipped with an X-ray machine and dental and laboratory facilities for the use of the employees, Aguilar said.

VMC is also allowing a hospital in Victorias City, run by the Ikaayong Lawas Foundation, to use the St. Joseph's medical equipment, Aguilar said. The hospital will be accredited by VMC's health care provider, Fortune Care, so it can treat its employees.

VMC employees who used to avail of free services from St. Joseph's Hospital are now covered by Fortune Care, Aguilar said.

ROUNDUP

Free lawyers for OFWs

BAGUIO CITY—The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration has tapped the services of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines for free legal assistance to victims of illegal recruitment. The Owwa, through Deputy Administrator Delmer Cruz, and the IBP chapters in La Union and Baguio-Benguet on Friday and Saturday signed an agreement paving the way for free legal services to indigent overseas Filipino workers and their families. Since 1999, close to 10,000 OFWs have been given legal assistance.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 suspected NPA nabbed

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Isabela—Three suspected New People's Army rebels were captured after a firefight with government soldiers in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija, on Thursday, Army reports said. Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Alvarado, 5th Infantry Division commander, identified the rebels as Joel Macabitas and Mario Gabres, both of the NPA's Venerando Villacillo Command operating in Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya. The reports did not identify the third captured rebel. Alvarado said soldiers recovered a laptop computer, an 81-mm mortar, medicines and anti-government documents from a house in Barangay Puncan, Carranglan, that the rebels abandoned. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

P4.4M for 32 villages

CALAPAN CITY—The provincial government is set to start the P4.4 million Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS) Project this year. Teresita A. Umbao, provincial social welfare officer, said P2.3 million have been allocated for 17 barangays in the first district and P2.1 million for 15 barangays in the second district. Each barangay will get P140,000 for the CIDSS projects whose target beneficiaries are Mangyans and poor families. *Donna Virola, PDI Southern Tagalog Bureau*

Six soldiers promoted

CAMP NAKAR, Lucena City—The Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command promoted six soldiers of the Bravo Company of the 76th Infantry Battalion based in the Bondoc Peninsula. Promoted for gallantry in action against New People's Army guerrillas in September last year in Barangay Kinagunan, Padre Burgos, Quezon, were Staff Sergeants Sergio Cardona, Pablo Granfil, Rey Moneda, Dominador Gali, and Cpl. Dennis Dones. Six NPA rebels were killed in the encounter. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Primary health care

THE DEPARTMENT of Health will implement in Oriental Mindoro the Integrated Community Health Services Project, which will strengthen the primary health care delivery in the province. Dr. Aristeo Baldos, chief of the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital, said P2.5 million was allocated to upgrade the facilities in his hospital and those in some barangay health centers. Pola, Socorro, Victoria, Baco and San Teodoro had been marked as priority towns. *Donna Virola, PDI Southern Tagalog Bureau*

3 cop officers suspended

PALO, Leyte—Three police officers were suspended on Monday for grave misconduct. Records at the Police Regional Internal Affairs Service based in Camp Ruperto Kangleon here showed that Chief Supt. Nardito Yoro, police director for Eastern Visayas meted a 46-day suspension on PO2 Eduardo Resma of MacArthur town in Leyte for grave threats. Yoro also suspended SPO4 Orlando Aujero of the Tacloban City Police Office and SPO4 Gilbert Bueno of Leyte Provincial Police Office for 10 days for failing to pay their debts from a local moneylender.

Cynthia A. Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau

2 drug pushers arrested

TAGBILARAN CITY—The police arrested two suspected drug pushers in two separate operations on Tuesday. A police team collared Nelson Lumokso, 31, a tricycle driver, for allegedly possessing a pack containing 700 grams of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride). In the evening, the same police team arrested Nick Navarro, 41 and a resident of Barangay Ermita, in Cebu City, while he was about to board a Cebu-bound fast ferry. A pack containing about 3.7 grams of shabu was allegedly recovered from the suspect.

Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao will continue to experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Southern Visayas and Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy. source: **pagasa**

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI32° Lo 19°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 24° Lo 11°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 18°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 19°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 19°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 20°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Widepsread Rains	Hi 27° Lo 21°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/02/18/02

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PER DTI NCR PERMIT NO. 0358 SERIES OF 2002

Gov't exec pushes for formation of tribal armed force

MATI, Davao Oriental—An official of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) here has called for the creation of an armed "Ancestral Domain Forces" that will protect and defend the tribal people against land grabbing, armed conflict and destruction of the natives' habitat.

NCIP regional director Ruque Agton said there was a "necessity" now to form what he called the "Ancestral Domain Forces," which is equivalent to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, pointing out the government's failure to protect the *lumads*.

His proposal came amid calls by Mandaya *lumads* in the province for the provincial government to provide them "more firearms and bullets" for their war against the New People's Army.

For defense

The *lumad* warriors have claimed to have killed at least 10 NPA rebels in Baganga and Caraga towns.

"I am in favor of arming the *lumads* provided it is not for the government's anti-insurgency program but for the defense of their ancestral domain, against land grabbers and illegal loggers," Agton, who was here recently to attend a consultation with Mandaya *lumads* in Barangays Macambol and Cabuaya, said.

The two barangays are being eyed by at least eight mining firms for their mineral exploration projects.

"We should have learned the lesson from many of our brother *lumads* who were being tapped by the government in actual anti-insurgency operation. How many were being killed in the firefight with the NPA rebels? Did they get any support from the government? Nothing," he said.

Real struggle

"Besides, fighting insurgency is not our struggle, it is a political problem. Our struggle is to stop the continuous displacement of many indigenous peoples from their ancestral land," he added.

In Boston town, residents are against the municipal government's plan to allocate funds for the purchase of shotguns to be issued to civilians who will fight the NPA. Boston town councilor Marcial Plaza said their plan to "distribute firearms to civilians" was shelved due to the people's "strong protest."

Mandaya *lumads* in the neighboring Cateel town are also calling on the provincial government to "confiscate" all the firearms it gave to civilians.

"So we can have peace in our community," said tribal leader Ermelita Latiban.

Johnny Banugan, an anti-NPA *lumad* warrior, said they were instructed by the provincial government to return all the firearms it issued to them "once the war with the NPA was over."

The human rights group Karapatan Mindanao said at least seven persons suspected to be NPA rebels had been missing since the Mandaya *lumads* in Baganga town declared war against the NPA in October last year. ***Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Heart babies now bubbly, healthy

From page A1

what ordinary kids do because he has a congenital heart disease called PDA or patent ductus arteriosus.

PDA occurs when the ductus arteriosus connecting the aorta and pulmonary vein is left open when it is expected to close after a newborn's first breaths.

Danica and Mitzi, however, are fortunate because Dr. Serafin de Leon, a Filipino heart surgeon based in New Orleans, and doctors from the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) led by Dr. Ludgerio Torres, had patched the hole in their hearts and freed them from threats of complications.

Danica is now studying at a day-care center in the city. Through the help of donors who coursed their donations through the Inquirer, Danica underwent a heart surgery supervised by De Leon at Tulane University Hospital in New Orleans in 1999.

Mitzi

A year later, the same group of Samaritans pooled their resources to help save Mitzi of Tuba, Benguet, from VSD or ventricular septal defect.

VSD occurs when the wall separating the left and right ventricles is not complete and allows unoxygenated blood to mix.

Mitzi's father, a security guard at the Baguio City National High School, is the sole breadwinner in the family. The Sicay couple has nine children.

Since the family could not raise enough funds for Mitzi's medications, the Sicays sought the help of the Inquirer to contact the people who helped Danica.

De Leon arrived in the country in November last year as part of his yearly trip to operate on Filipino children with heart ailments.

The donors took the chance and did what seemed to be impossible. They asked De Leon if he could accommodate Mitzi despite his tight schedule.

Fortunately, Torres supported the group and told De Leon that Mitzi needed immediate surgery as the girl was then suffering from pulmonary hypertension.

The group's wish was granted. Instead of vacationing during the All Souls' Day, De Leon, Torres and a team of heart surgeons at the PHC repaired Mitzi's abnormal membranes and veins around her heart.

Mitzi, once a "blue baby," is healthy, her cheeks rosy. She also gained 10 pounds two months after her surgery. Her hair is slowly growing and she can play with her eight brothers and sisters.

Mawin

Mawin can be healthy, too, like his newfound friends Danica and Mitzi when the hole in his heart is patched.

In fact, his mother is longing to see him stand on his own feet without much support from her. Call it a mother's instinct, but Mrs. Lopena knows her ardent dream is within reach.

On Feb. 9, after two hours of waiting, the Manila-based donors who helped Danica and Mitzi went to the PDI Northern Luzon Bureau office and met the heart babies.

They also met Mawin's family to talk about the boy's surgery.

"Thank you, sirs, for everything and for the new life of our children," the mothers of Danica and Mitzi said.

It was also the first time for the Jimenos and Sicays to meet Mawin and his mother, who had been anticipating the arrival of the donors who could help raise the money to save the boy.

The donors, all professionals engaged in various businesses who responded to the Inquirer's call for help, will formally launch the Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) this year.

These people contacted each other, formed various committees and elected people who will run the foundation.

Doctors from the Heart Center like Torres, De Leon, Wilberto Lopez and Juliet Balderas agreed to sit on the medical advisory board and waived their professional fees whenever they treat kids who are CHF patients.

CHF president Alvin Murriel said the foundation aimed to save the lives of needy children suffering from congenital heart disease so that they may be able to live "normal, happy and fruitful lives."

"It is committed to provide assistance through fund-raising and other means in order to support the patient's surgical and medical needs," said CHF vice president Willy Arguelles.

Arguelles and CHF executive director Claro Ganiac, who are both in the advertising business, "pulled strings" to come up with a brochure about the foundation.

"February is the love month and we ask people to express their love by giving financial support to children with heart ailment. Most of us don't know the grim statistics that 10 babies out of every 1,000 live births have congenital heart diseases," they said.

The CHF was also instrumental in contacting De Leon and asking him to return to the country to operate on other young patients like Noel Mendoza of Pateros, Manila, and Ariel Lappay of Tuguegarao City.

Thanks to the saving hands of De Leon, Torres and Lopez, Mendoza and Lappay are now enjoying a happy childhood.

"This is a story of poverty and misery turned into life because of determination, faith in prayers and confidence in the goodness of civic-minded people," wrote Lappay's mother Ana Marie Lappay to CHF.

HEART BABIES: (from left) Mawin Lopena, Danica Jimeno and Mitzi Sicay play "luksong tinik."

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

US Green Berets fly into Basilan

From page A1

attacks in New York and Washington.

"We are very honored and proud to be here," Colonel Maxwell said. "This is an opportunity for us to work together with our Philippine brothers-in-arms, to train together, to learn from each other and we expect that we'll have a very successful exercise."

The arrival of Maxwell and his men raised to 51 the total number of US soldiers in Basilan where the Abu Sayyaf is holding hostage an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse.

Maxwell, however, appealed to the public, particularly critics of the war games, to let the US soldiers prove themselves.

He denied the presence of American troops could lead to an increase in human rights violations in the predominantly Muslim island-province.

"I can assure you that these are men of probity here. We respect the sovereignty of the Philippines. I expect our men to treat every Filipino with dignity and respect and I don't expect that we'll have any incidents," Maxwell said.

Cultural sensitivity

Before flying to Basilan, Maxwell and his men underwent a cultural sensitivity seminar at the Southern Command headquarters in Zamboanga City.

"We were informed of the unique culture here," Maxwell said. "One thing we have learned in the sensitivity seminar is not to publicly show affection. We know we should not extend our hand unless the people offer theirs."

Col. Roland Detabali, Southcom chief of operations, said the Americans were briefed on the customs and traditions of the Yakan Muslims, which make up 60 percent of the population in Basilan.

"They were told not to point their guns on men and women there, and not to frisk just anyone," Detabali told the Inquirer over the telephone.

The American soldiers will be joining patrols in Basilan toward the end of the six-month training program, but only as observers. They are allowed to defend themselves if attacked.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the bomb attacks in Jolo and Zamboanga City on Saturday would not affect the military training exercise which, according to him, was expected to "proceed as programmed and without any hitches." ***(See related story on page A1)***

"It is now in full-swing and the time plan is proceeding smoothly," Reyes said.

Maxwell said his men would help train Filipino soldiers in night fighting, night flying and psychological operations.

A total of 660 US soldiers will be taking part in the exercise, but most of them will be staying in Zamboanga City and Cebu City as logistics and support staff.

Settling down

Shortly after landing, some US soldiers strung up hammocks and napped as others began installing equipment. Others attended a briefing in a grass-roofed wooden hut.

A whirring generator supplied electricity to the camp, illustrating another problem for US troops—steady blackouts that shut down equipment and prevent soldiers from retrieving water from the deep well.

Only a few of the men are built like the steely warriors they are reputed to be. Most look like college freshmen while a few exude the air of university professors.

But the elite US Green Beret troops that arrived in Basilan on Sunday have been to some of the world's hottest flash points—Somalia, Iraq, Haiti, Kosovo, Afghanistan—carrying the battle cry: "Liberate the oppressed."

"We are trained to survive. We're trained for every situation that could come up, everything," Sgt. Bryan McFarland, 24, told Reuters before two US military helicopters lifted him and his buddies out of Zamboanga City to Basilan.

Shaped like a turtle and about three times the size of Singapore, Basilan is clad in jungles so thick you cannot see the enemy five meters beyond your nose.

The 160 members of the US Special Forces, who will be deployed in Basilan over the next several days, constitute just a fraction of the 50,000 to 60,000 warriors comprising the Special Operations Command.

The US military set up the command in the early 1950s to serve as its strike force in hot spots around the world.

Its fighters from the US Army are better known as Green Berets, while their Air Force counterparts are dubbed air commandos. The Navy component, called Naval Special Warfare Command, is popularly known as the SEALS.

Officers say each Special Forces unit has its own specialty. Collectively, they are experts in guerrilla warfare and counter-terrorism, in conducting raids with the stealth and quickness of a cat and the deadliness of a tiger.

They are experts in surveillance, using high-tech equipment. One of their units, Delta Force, has a reputation for rescuing hostages behind enemy lines.

Sharpshooters

They are trained as sharpshooters and can parachute into enemy territory from low-flying aircraft or land from assault helicopters equipped with special radar that enables them to fly through the heaviest storms over mountainous terrain.

Individual equipment includes body armor, assault rifles and night vision goggles.

But few displayed bulging muscles like Hollywood's Rambo, a fictional Green Beret played by actor Sylvester Stallone.

"That's a fallacy," Sgt. Maj. Jim Bray, of Boston, Massachusetts, said. "What's more important is for Special Forces fighters to be agile and able to think on their feet."

"First thing, you've got to be mentally tough. You can't quit. No quitters here," said one soldier, who asked not to be identified.

"You need to have drive, and you need to be honest. I certainly will not want to fight alongside a soldier who is not going to be honest with me and mentally tough to cover me."

A US Special Forces fighter is trained to withstand extreme physical hardship in hostile situations where he may not know if or when help is coming, according to the Americans.

"They want somebody who can operate in a variety of environments and stressful situations," Bray said. "They want somebody who would be able to make quick decisions."

A sergeant, who asked not to be named, said wading into Abu Sayyaf territory did not faze him. The bandits have already beheaded 14 hostages, including an American.

"The Special Forces have been in every country that you can imagine and there is always someone bad who's going to hurt us," he said.

"We're not only warriors. We facilitate peace," the sergeant said. "Our motto is liberate the oppressed and we have liberated the oppressed." ***Reports by AP, AFP, Reuters and Allan A. Nawal***

BRANDISHING modern firearms, members of the US Special Forces get ready for the "Balikatan" war exercises. VAL HANDUMON

Palace blasts Abus for Jolo, Zamboanga bombings

From page A1

are suspects but nobody has been apprehended yet."

He said the military was working with the local police in "looking at every possible motive and angle" behind the twin explosions.

In a teleconference call with Palace reporters, Tiglao said the attacks were staged by civilian supporters or members of the Abu Sayyaf, which is now the target of the ongoing RP-US "Balikatan 02-1" war exercise. ***(See banner story.)***

Citing military intelligence analysis, Tiglao said the bombings could not have been carried out by groups other than the Abu Sayyaf, "which is obviously desperate now and would want to hit back and disrupt our military (offensives)."

"What we're saying is these attacks only show how urgent our need is to wipe out terrorists in our country," he said.

Tiglao said the attacks were meant to divert the military's attention and force it to deploy more troops to urban centers in Mindanao instead of concentrating its efforts in Basilan.

The United States has linked the Abu Sayyaf to the al-Qaida international terror network of Osama bin Laden, the principal suspect in the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has instructed military and police forces in Mindanao to intensify intelligence cooperation to prevent similar attacks in the future, according to her spokesperson.

"To counter terrorist attacks, you have to rely on good intelligence," Tiglao said.

He assured residents in areas like Jolo and Zamboanga City that military and police deployments there were "very much adequate."

'First suspect'

While security forces have yet to pinpoint the persons who staged the bombings, he said the government considered the Abu Sayyaf the "first suspect."

"That's the initial intelligence report," Tiglao said of the bandit group's hand in the attacks.

On Saturday, Col. Romeo Tolentino, head of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade based in Sulu, said a syndicate, which is behind illegal activities in Jolo, could also be responsible for the explosion.

The Sulu Internal Defense Force recently uncovered the activities of the syndicate.

However, some residents said the bombing could have been a military retaliation after three Scout Rangers were beaten up and hacked to death at the Jolo market on Jan. 17 following a rally staged by followers of jailed rebel leader Nur Misuari.

Jolo Mayor Suod Tan cautioned the people against speculating, saying an investigation was still being conducted to unmask the suspects and reveal their possible motive.

Misuari's men?

In an interview over radio station dzMM in Manila, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said supporters of Misuari could also be behind the blasts as part of a plot to erode public support to the RP-US war games.

Asked to comment on Golez's statements, Villanueva said that the presidential adviser had his own idea.

"Jolo is too far from Balikatan. But there was also bombing in Zamboanga, I think that would be what Golez was referring to," he said, noting that Zamboanga was the scene of similar incidents in the past.

Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, AFP spokesperson, on Saturday blamed the Jolo bombing on Misuari's armed followers in the Moro National Liberation Front.

Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, Balikatan co-director, downplayed the incidents, saying these won't affect the ongoing exercises.

"On our level, we don't see any (complication). We don't see anything. Probably, the police or the Southern Command is doing something about these," he added. ***With reports from Martin P. Marfil and Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

More 'Pentagon' arrests expected

From page A1

cials said the arrest of Pentagon "brains" Faisal Marohombsar will be followed by more arrests or more deaths of gang members.

"I'm very sure that, just like many members of the Abu Sayyaf, many members of the Pentagon are going to be either killed or arrested," Golez said yesterday.

"It's good that this happened because we are nipping in the bud the Pentagon Gang that would like to follow the criminal trail of the Abu Sayyaf," Golez told reporters here.

Director General Leandro Mendoza, Philippine National Police chief, said Marohombsar was undergoing tactical interrogation in Camp Crame. He described Marohombsar as the "brains" behind the gang, responsible for planning the group's activities.

"This is a major accomplishment. You know, he is the one actually planning the activities of the Pentagon. He's the brains, as it were. You remove the brains, of course it will greatly affect the group's activities," Mendoza said.

Mendoza confirmed that Marohombsar had earlier sent surrender feelers to the government, but the PNP chief said these were rejected because of Marohombsar's unreasonable demands. ***(See related story on page A5.)***

Marohombsar, alias Commander Mubarak II, was arrested on Saturday morning in Quiapo, Manila. Ten others, including Marohombsar's wife and a policeman, were invited for questioning.

In Malacañang, however, the President's spokesperson raised the possibility of Marohombsar being accepted as a government witness.

"Right now we have to evaluate that depending on what Faisal would really be able to tell us," Rigoberto Tiglao told Palace reporters in a teleconference call.

"So far there are no indications that they are willing to be put under the Witness Protection Program."

But Tiglao admitted that the evaluation of Marohombsar's qualification as a possible state witness was on hold because security forces were concentrating on follow-up operations.

He dismissed published reports that Marohombsar's activities had the blessings of no less than Mendoza and Interior Secretary Jose Lina.

"Kidnapping incidents have been the biggest headache of Mendoza and Secretary Lina," Tiglao said. "Why would they worsen it?"

Marohombsar and the rest are now in the custody of the National Anti-Crime Commission's Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, or Naktaf.

Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Naktaf chief, said the arrest of Marohombsar was a "big setback" to the Pentagon gang, noting that he was one of the assistants of gang leader Tahir Alonto and one of the gang's "group commanders."

According to Naktaf, Marohombsar was involved in four kidnapping cases, including those of Pierre Belanger last November and Ma. Cecilia Bonifacio in January. ***With a report from TJ Burgonio***

Bush trip to Northeast Asia blunts anti-Islamic tag on terror drive

From page A1

of evil" because they were reported to have produced weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear devices and biological and chemical elements.

Bush said he planned to remind the world that North Korea was seeking "to threaten freedom with weapons of mass destruction," thereby widening the scope of the US campaign against terrorism beyond the al-Qaida network.

The United States needs to repair its relations with Southeast Asia where its war on terrorism has come under increasing attack—in particular, in the Philippines, coming from the nationalists and the Left—but the emphasis on Northeast Asia indicates broader strategic concerns.

In Japan, Bush seeks to bolster Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's reforms to revive the flagging Japanese economy.

In China, the larger objective is to deepen trade relations with Beijing following its accession to the World Trade Organization.

Clearly, in the US scheme of priorities, Southeast Asia takes a backseat, and Southeast Asians are not likely to improve their position in this scheme by aligning themselves uncritically behind the US-led war on terrorism.

Unilateralism

As the United States seeks to forge closer links with Northeast Asia and as it presses its campaign against terrorists, the Europeans are slowly developing their relations with Asia, through such institutions as the Asia Europe Foundation, which celebrated its fifth anniversary here from Friday to Saturday.

The Europeans are also distancing themselves from American "unilateralism."

Following the spectacular US military success in Afghanistan (mainly a US effort with military contributions from Britain, France and Germany and other European contingents), Washington has acquired a feeling of hubris. It expects to take the lead, without too much consultation with its allies, and be followed by them.

This unilateral approach was articulated by US Vice President Dick Cheney who said, "America has friends and allies in this cause, but only we can lead it . . . only we can rally the world in a task of this complexity against an enemy so elusive and so resourceful. The United States and only the United States can see this effort through victory."

American triumphal statements like this, coming from the post-Cold War era where the United States has emerged as the lone global superpower, has served to widen the policy rift between the United States and the Europeans. Such roughshod approach to the anti-terrorist campaign likewise has increased resentment for lack of consultation.

There is increasing concern among the Europeans that as the Pentagon plans an attack on Iraq with the deployment of an army of about 200,000 men, the United States is leading the campaign to catastrophic enlargement of the campaign.

Patten

The European misgivings were best expressed by Chris Patten, the European Union's external affairs commissioner.

Patten wrote in the Financial Times: "In the immediate aftermath of the attacks (Sept. 11), it seemed that the US had rediscovered its need for allies to confront this common menace. The stunning and unexpectedly rapid success of the military campaign in Afghanistan was a tribute to American capacity.

"But it has perhaps reinforced some dangerous instincts that the projection of military power is the only basis of true security; that the US can rely on itself and that allies may be useful as an optional extra but that the US is big and strong enough to manage without them if it must.

"I hope those instincts will not prevail, because I believe them to be profoundly misguided. The lesson of Sept. 11 is that we need both American leadership and international cooperation on an unprecedented scale. It is in the world's interests, as it is in the interests of the world's greatest power, that leadership should be exercised in partnership."

The views of Patten, a Briton, are not shared by British Prime Minister Tony Blair but have resonance with France and Germany, which think that Bush's "axis of evil" speech is taking the Western alliance into a military adventurist path.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ghost patients still haunting Medicare; ₱300M lost yearly

From page A1

to meet a total of 1.4 million claims.

Under the National Health Insurance Act of 1995, claiming Medicare benefits for ghost patients is a serious offense, punishable by revocation of the offending hospital's PhilHealth accreditation or even its license to operate.

The PhilHealth board, chaired by Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, is a quasi-judicial body. Prosecutors of the corporation are authorized to conduct fact-finding investigations on complaints filed by any person or by PhilHealth against erring hospitals and doctors, and if a prima facie case exists, to file and prosecute the case before the firm's arbitration department.

The 11-member board reviews the arbiter's decision. Final decisions by the board may be reviewed by the Court of Appeals.

Zambo hospital

Topping the list of hospitals under investigation is the Igano Community Hospital in Molave, Zamboanga del Sur.

The 22-bed health-care institution, established in 1997 but accredited by PhilHealth only last year, is facing five counts of claims for non-admitted patients, four counts of fabrication of PhilHealth forms and supporting documents and five counts of breach of warranties of accreditation.

In a formal complaint filed in late November last year, PhilHealth prosecutor Enerito Yañez alleged that the hospital, one of the 775 privately owned primary hospitals in the country, "with the purpose of defrauding (PhilHealth), deliberately filed five claims" for patients Kint Aurell Lim, Apolinario Apepe, Angel Nericua, Saturnina Pamat and Dexter Balindres.

"In truth and in fact," it said, "the alleged patients were not really confined since they just sought for free medical checkup, free medicines and free grocery items extended by the respondent."

Yañez alleged further that the hospital "prepared PhilHealth documents for patients Josephine Jarap, Eusebia Lindio and Ruth Talip for the purpose of submitting the same to (PhilHealth) although the patients were never confined at the respondent hospital's premises on the dates alleged in those forms."

The patients "disclosed that they just availed (themselves) of free medical checkup, free medicines and free grocery items from the respondent and in exchange thereof they were asked to accomplish PhilHealth forms," said the prosecution lawyer.

Yañez also claimed the hospital "prepared a PhilHealth claim for patient Hanniel Gualdalquiber for his alleged confinement on Feb. 26 to 28, 2001."

Citing the hospital's medicine records, however, the prosecution lawyer said medications were administered on Feb. 25, 2001, one day before the patient was admitted to the hospital.

According to Yañez, the Igano Community Hospital also supposedly performed X-ray and laboratory services to patients Semeon Beral, Victoriano Gulbe, Gendy Melan Flores, Jannilyn Bustamante and Arcel Arendayen. The services "were not registered in the (hospital) logbook as required by PhilHealth Circular 56, series of 1999."

Dr. Noli Arnulfo Igano, owner and medical director of the hospital, has denied PhilHealth's allegations. In a phone interview, Igano said his hospital had affidavits from our patients disproving all the charges made by PhilHealth. He stressed: "We did not file any fraudulent claim."

PhilHealth has sent a summons to the hospital, but it has yet to set a hearing date for the case.

Tiaong, Quezon

PhilHealth has also sent a summons to the 10-bed Hospital de Soledad in Tiaong, Quezon.

The insurance firm alleged that the small hospital "for the purpose of claiming reimbursement (for a hospital bill amounting to only P1,760) filed a claim in behalf of patient Raissa Clare Abraham who was allegedly confined in the hospital from July 19 to 22, 2000 for bronchial asthma."

Dr. Celso Exconde, the hospital's acting medical director, denied PhilHealth's allegation in a letter to lawyer Michael Troy Polintan, PhilHealth arbiter.

But Abraham, now 14 years old and a sophomore student of the St. John Parochial School in Tiaong, has told a PhilHealth field monitoring team that she had not been confined at all.

When the I-Team visited Tiaong, not a single patient was confined at the hospital, which is on the town's main street and sandwiched between a photo shop and another health-care provider, the Liwag Medical Clinic and General Hospital.

A framed certificate on the hospital's front office showed its PhilHealth accreditation had expired on Nov. 30 last year.

Exconde showed this reporter the hospital logbook which listed Abraham as patient No. 45 (out of 67 patients supposedly confined at the hospital in July 2000).

Exconde's claim is backed up by an affidavit issued by the girl's mother Erlinda, a mathematics and trigonometry teacher at the Recto National High School, also in Tiaong. "Because of her confusion, she forgot that she had really been confined at the Hospital de Soledad," she claimed in a sworn statement written in Filipino.

Erlinda Abraham admitted that Exconde was their family doctor, but she said she had "no intention to cover up" for the doctor.

Other hospitals

The seven-bed St. Michael General Hospital in Bacacay, Albay, is also in trouble for allegedly filing a claim, amounting to P1,560, for a non-admitted patient by the name of Catalina Base.

PhilHealth investigation disclosed that Base showed up at the hospital early in the morning of Sept. 9, 2000, complaining of abdominal pains. But "due to limited medical resources," she was transferred to another hospital, the Cabredo Medical Clinic & General Hospital in Tabaco, Albay.

St. Michael General Hospital officials claimed there was a mix-up, saying Base's chart was "inadvertently used by another patient (Maria Vergara, a non-Medicare patient)."

But PhilHealth investigators did not buy their story. They believed there was prima facie evidence that warranted the filing of the case against the hospital.

Two other hospitals in Bicol, G. Gonzales Medical Clinic in Tiwi and Muñoz Medical Clinic in Camalig, both in Albay, are facing similar charges.

In Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, the 19-bed Jacalan Hospital has been named respondent in another PhilHealth case for allegedly claiming Medicare benefits for Carmela Dar, a non-admitted patient.

Dr. Ma. Cristeta Soledad Jacalan, the hospital owner and medical director, claimed she had yet to get a copy of the complaint.

Other hospitals that allegedly filed claims for ghost patients included the 13-bed Ancheta Clinic and Hospital in Vigan, Ilocos Sur; the 10-bed Tagaloguin Clinic in Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur; the 15-bed Esperanza Medicare Community Hospital in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur; the five-bed Rico Medical Clinic and Hospital in Trento, Agusan del Sur; and the Arcega's Clinic and Hospital in Noralla, South Cotabato.

Dr. Tiburcio Macias, president of the 2,070-member Philippine Hospital Association, told the INQUIRER he was "not sure if some hospitals are behind such fraudulent claims," which are clearly a violation of the hospitals' Code of Ethics.

"Maybe in the past. There were reported irregularities in the past," said Macias, also chief of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Hospital in Dipolog City.

Macias' family owns the 25-bed Mayor Joaquin Macias Memorial Hospital in Simbangan town, also in the same Western Mindanao province. His wife, Dr. Felicitas Macias, is the hospital's medical director.

Like Macias, Dr. Edgardo Clemente, PHA vice president for Luzon and whose family is a major shareholder of the Capitol Medical Center in Quezon City, said he had "no idea if those reports about (ghost patients) are really true."

"Maybe in remote areas, but not in urban areas like Metro Manila. I doubt if hospitals or doctors here would resort to such fraudulent claims just to get that miniscule amount," said Dr. Ludgerio Torres, director of the 280-bed Philippine Heart Center, also in Quezon City.

But Sen. Juan Flavier, who was both health secretary and chair of the Philippine Medical Care Commission (forerunner of PhilHealth) from 1992 to 1995, told the INQUIRER, "There really are ghost patients!"

Flavier's ghosts

Flavier, now chair of both the Senate committees on health and on cultural communities, recalled that during the early 1990s, "at least 30 percent of all claims for Medicare benefits were fraudulent. Most of the fraudulent claims were filed by small hospitals with a 25-bed capacity or less and with the hospital owner acting as medical director and administrator."

During his stint at the DOH, Flavier said, "cases of ghost patients, medicines and laboratory expenses were rampant throughout the country, but more so in Mindanao. I was hot on the issue. (Sometime in 1993) I said I wanted to put in jail a couple of erring hospital directors, but I failed because I couldn't get any proof."

"You know why? In most cases, 'everybody happy' was what happened. A case of 'You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.' Some hospital owners connive with the doctors or the patients who do it either out of innocence or naiveté."

Filing claims for ghost patients, among other fraudulent claims, is an "act that greatly prejudices the PhilHealth program," PhilHealth's Duque said.

And FPDU's Villegas said the fraud was continuing.

"We do spot checks not only of health-care providers but also of patients who were cited by the hospitals in their claims. The patients are ghosts because, most often, you will not find their names in the hospital logbooks," Villegas said.

At first, they would deny they were ever confined, he said, "prompting us to file a case against the hospitals. Here's the sad part. When we require the hospital to answer our complaint they find a way to make the patients deny their earlier statements."

But "that doesn't stop us from going after erring hospitals," he added.

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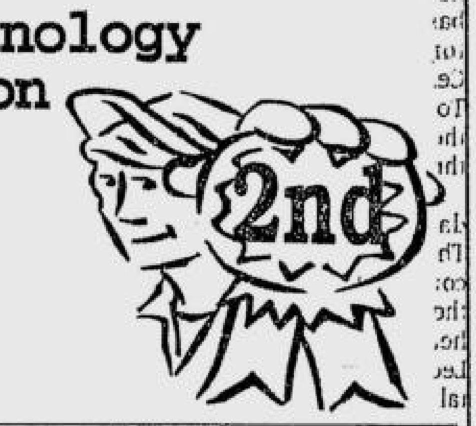

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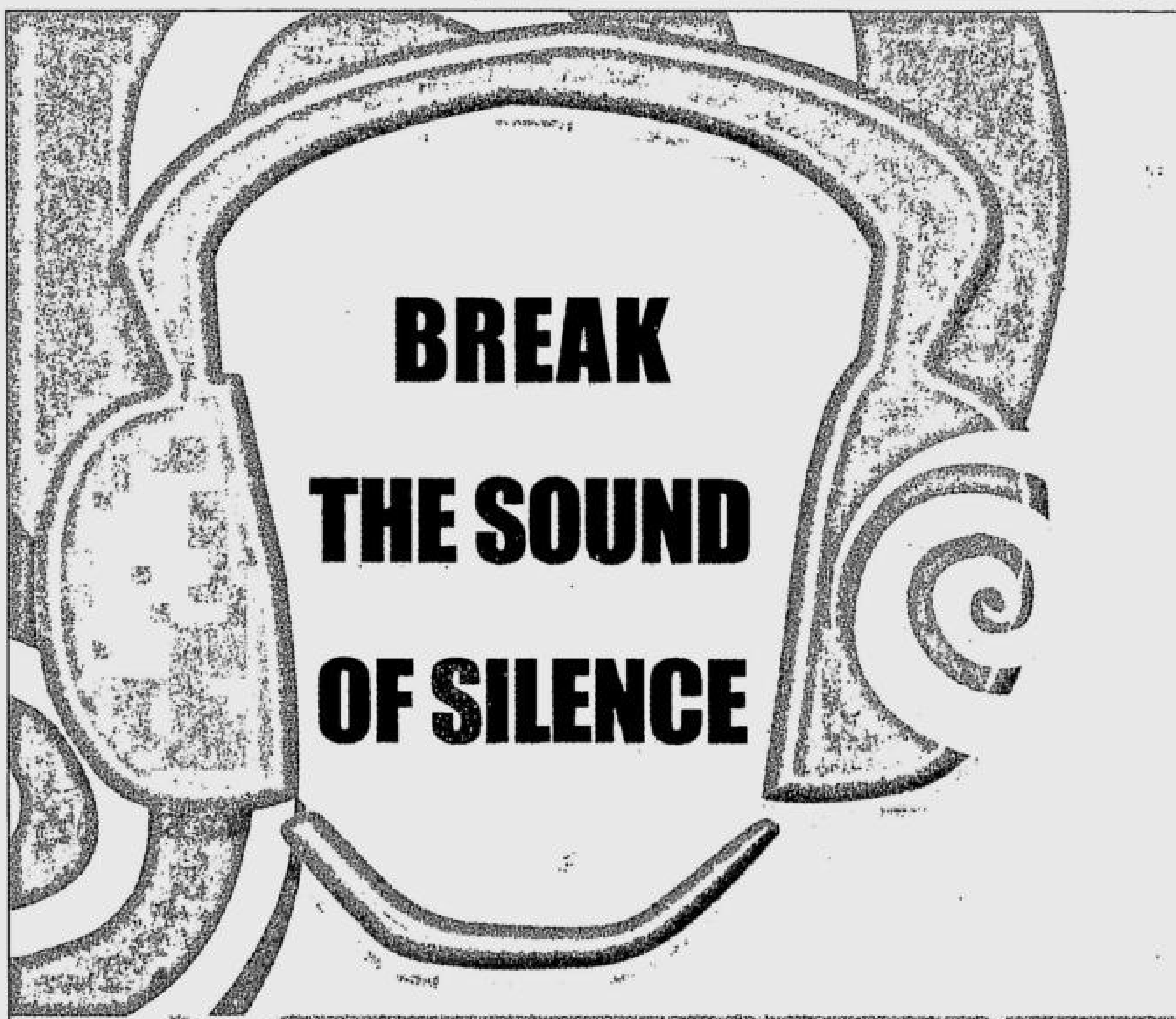

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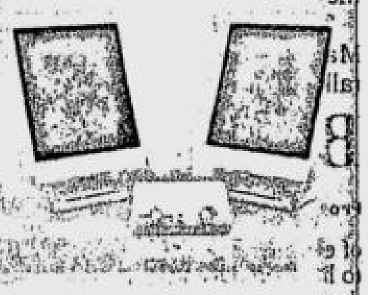

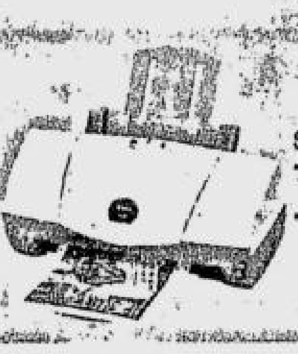

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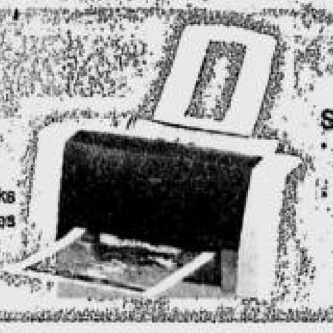

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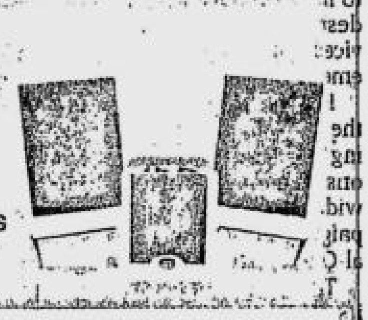

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Batangas Entry overwhelms rivals

By Edwin Villanueva

TOP choice Batangas Entry stood out in Wind Blown's absence, winning the Senate President Cup race handily yesterday at San Lazaro.

Steered by Miguel "Badjao" Recosana, Batangas Entry crossed the wire three lengths clear of Lyonnais to pick up the P600,000 first prize in the 1,900-meter event.

Master Ijhay finished third followed by Charlemagne and Santa Ana Park.

Batangas Entry's owners Paolo Mendoza and Dioceldo Sy said they might enter their horse in the second running of the First Gentleman Silver Cup on Feb. 24 at Santa Ana.

Hermie Esguerra's Wind Blown, the 2001 Horse of the Year, is the defending champion in the race honoring First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

Batangas Entry (Piker-Because Milady) nearly beat Wind Blown (Hazm-Wind in My Hair) in the Classic Open last December. The Rudy Mendoza and Nick Atienza-trained colt also placed second to Wind Blown in last year's Presidential Gold Cup.

Also scoring big yesterday was Gemstone, who stunned the favorites in the San Miguel Beer Cup.

Winter Games records ripped

SALT LAKE CITY—Another medal, another record. Kjetil Andre Aamodt now has seven and he's still counting.

The first week of the Salt Lake Olympics ended with Norwegians conquering two different Utah mountains.

While Aamodt captured the men's super-G in Snowbasin, Ole Einar Bjoerndalen shot and skied his way at Soldier Hollow to the men's 12.5-kilometer biathlon pursuit crown to become the first triple gold medalist of these Games.

Two world records also fell Saturday. Dutch speedskater Gerard van Velde broke the 1,000-meter mark to win gold and Swiss skier Evelyne Leu set the world record in freestyle aerials qualifying. *AP*

Sir Eric to the rescue

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

LIKE a knight in shining armor, Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain is coming to the rescue of past achievers in sports by seeking the early implementation of Republic Act 9064, also called the "Sports Benefits and Incentives Act of 2001," which grants cash rewards and other non-monetary incentives to medal winners, their coaches and trainers in the Olympics, Asian and southeast Asian Games, including world championship events.

Signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo last April 5, 2001, RA 9064 should be implemented immediately for the sake of the poor, long-suffering and virtually forgotten retired athletes. Together with Malacañang, the 32-year-old Buhain said they were already in the process of fine-tuning the sports incentives act that would compensate in particular former sporting greats.

A multi-awarded swimmer, Buhain said the President has promised to talk to Ephraim Genuino, chair of the money-rich Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., as to how funds could be provided for the purpose. "We all want to give our past athletic heroes' rewards that are commensurate to the honors they have given the country. It's very painful to see former sporting heroes now living impoverished lives."

Recently, legendary sprinter Inocencia Solis died broke and crippled by diabetes because running did not make her rich even though she was the first Filipina to be crowned Asia's fastest woman by winning the centerpiece 100-meter dash in the 1958 Asian Games in Tokyo, beating Japan's highly-favored runners in a winning time of 12.4 seconds.

Dogs sports show at QC Hall grounds

THE GERMAN Shepherd Dog Federation of the Philippines kicked off its Landesgruppen and Sieger Sports Show Series last Saturday at the Quezon City Ball grounds.

The series, held annually by the GSDF under the able leadership of lawyer Jose Sibal and businessman Jewel Castellar, will have four to five landesgruppen and one national Sieger show.

Schedules are February, April, June and August for landesgruppen and October for the National Sieger show.

The first leg will be prestige-laden with SV Judge Germany Herr-Franz Peter Knaul scrutinizing the super dogs. Sieger and Siegerin titles will be at stake.

Entries from Germany fresh from the World Sieger 2001 held in Dusseldorf, Germany, are headed by SG-22 Iso Vom Zellwaldrand, SG-36 Kenzo Oasis, Hanno Dunieschenke, Walko Konigsadler, Dandy Altenbergerland, Jambo Falkenkanzel, and Pere Sade Yarok.

Sponsoring the event are Eukanuba, Happy Dog, and My Pet. Interested parties may call 412-4105 and GSDF secretariat 831-7371.

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Pag-IBIG FUND

11 February 2002

Her Excellency GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang, Manila

Dear Mrs. President:

We, the officers and staff of the *Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF),* better known as Pag-IBIG Fund, are writing to you to make known our sentiments:

1. We fully support the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD);
2. We strongly believe, however, that Pag-IBIG Fund should **NOT** be an attached agency of the DHUD. Rather, it should be identified together with the Social Security System (SSS) and Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) as a support agency to primarily provide funds for long-term housing mortgages for its members;
3. We staunchly support **MR. MANUEL C. CRISOSTOMO,** Pag-IBIG President and Chief Executive Officer, and his stand on the issue.

We realize the need to establish a Department of Housing and Urban Development (DUHD) for a more unified effort in implementing your housing vision. However, **Pag-IBIG Fund is a PROVIDENT FUND,** private in character, owned wholly by our members, and applied exclusively for their benefit. It is a savings system for employees, with housing as primary investment. **Its task of providing affordable housing finance to its members is always balanced by its duty of ensuring the viability and profitability of the funds entrusted to it by its members.** These are the twin, inseparable mandates of the Fund.

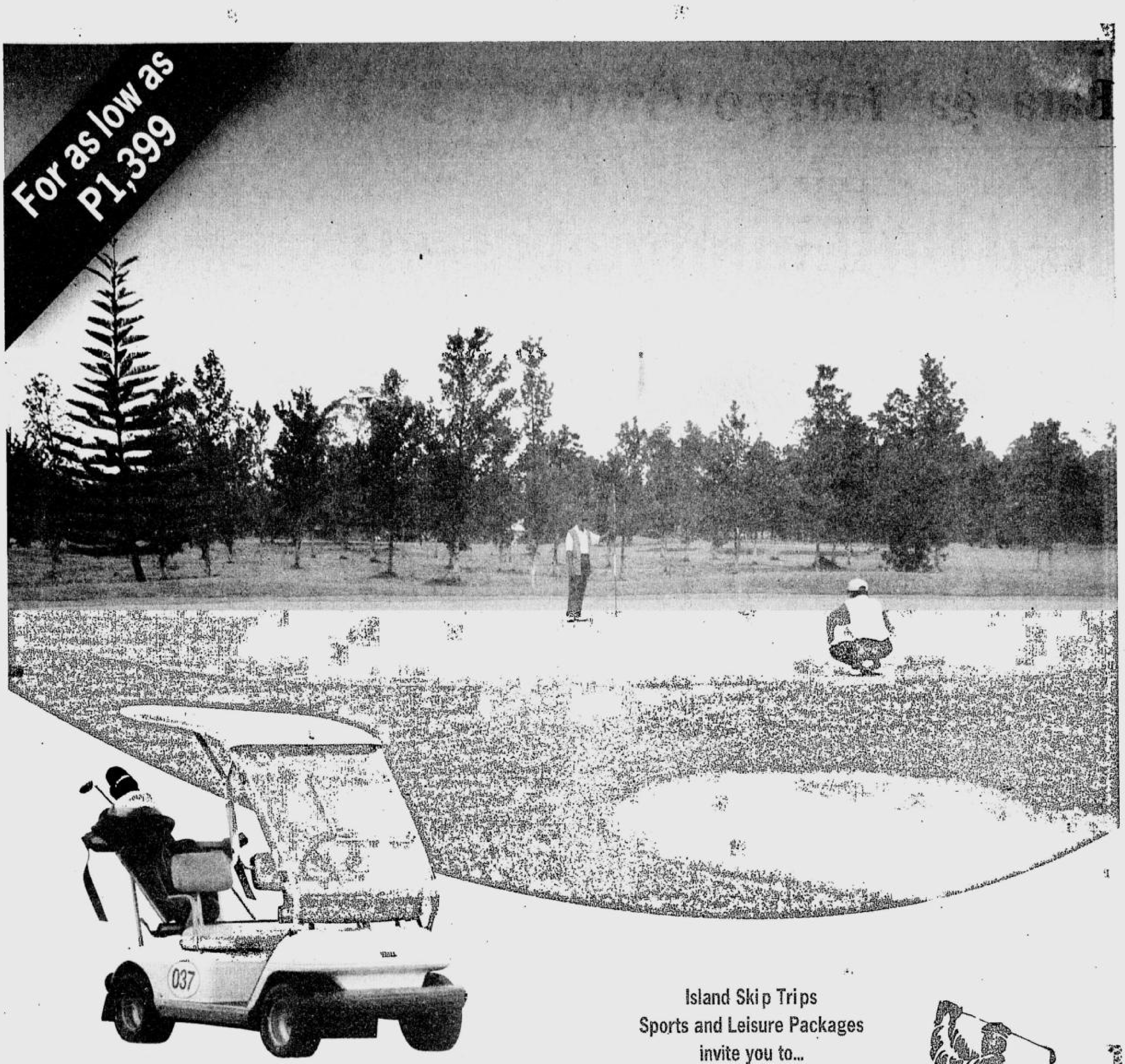
For these reasons, it is important for Pag-IBIG Fund to be not only autonomous, but to be headed by a leader whose competence has been proven time and again in his 17 years of service in the Fund. **MR. MANUEL C. CRISOSTOMO** has been a moving force behind the success of this corporation. He has the benefit of the 4.9 million Pag-IBIG members in his heart, and every decision he makes as Pag-IBIG President and CEO is informed by this abiding concern for the member. His integrity is impeccable and his commitment to public service, proven and beyond question.

Mrs. President, we have seen the reawakening of national consciousness in our people. We are heartened to see signs that lessons from the past have taught them to keep their vigilance. Your favorable response to our appeal will show our people in no uncertain terms that sustained excellent performance and commitment to public service are qualities that matter in your administration, and our 4.9 million members, who benefit from Mr. Crisostomo's prudent and effective management of their Fund, will always be grateful to you for it.

We wish you more and greater successes, and assure you of our continuing support.

Very respectfully yours,

Signed by 16 members of the Senior Management and Council of VPs. and 2037 employees



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McCarron ahead by a shot

LOS ANGELES—Scott McCarron holed a 15-meter eagle putt from just off the 17th green for a 6-under 65 Saturday, giving him a one-stroke lead over Toru Taniguchi in what figures to be another tight finish in the Nissan Open. Rarely does anyone separate himself from the field at the Riviera Country Club, mostly because of the small, knobby greens with subtle breaks. *AP*

SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ *Assistant Editor* **Edwin M. Villanueva**

PBA SAMSUNG CUP

Red Bull pummels FedEx

GAME TOMORROW (Philsports)
6 p.m.—Ginebra vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

BATANG Red Bull flexed its offensive might to repulse Federal Express, 107-99, yesterday in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Imports Joe Bunn and Julius Nwosu shone as the Thunder survived Jermaine Walker's 45-point output to follow up their 94-81 opening-game victory over Shell.

Bunn, who exploded for 47 points and 16 rebounds against the Turbo Chargers last week, asserted his prowess again to finish with 44 points.

The wide-bodied Nwosu also showed his share of offensive flair as he grabbed 18 rebounds on top of his 16 points made mostly from the inside.

Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao also gave credit to Red Bull's talented guards like Willie Miller, Jimwell Torion, and Junthy Valenzuela for backing up Nwosu and Bunn.

"I'm blessed with a good set of guards. These guys complemented our imports on both ends of the floor. We're small and yet we made it up with quickness," said Guiao, whose wards inflicted the Express' second straight setback.

But despite their height disadvantage, the Thunder outrebounded the Express, 61-29, with even the pint-sized Torion hauling down nine boards, four of them offensive.

Working behind a slow game in a bid to neutralize the Thunders' running game, the Express put up a semblance of a fight as Walker knocked in four straight triples to stay in the hunt.

In the second game, Shell subdued Coca-Cola, 90-82, to notch its first victory and tie the Tigers at 1-1.

RED BULL 107—Bunn 44, Nwosu 16, Torion 15, Miller 14, Tugade 11, Valenzuela 5, Se 2, Mendoza 0, Hizon 0, Reyes 0.

FEDEX 99—Walker 45, Rhodes 15, De Ocampo 15, Alvarez 11, Arboleda 5, Pumaren 4, Codiñera 4, Billones 0, Simon 0, Realubit 0.

Quarters: 26-34, 56-48, 78-68, 107-99.

SHELL 90—Jones 29, Dela Cruz 13, Grimm 13, Wainwright 12, Del Rosario 10, Sison 5, Esplana 4, Lim 2, Hrabak 2, Bacani 0, Paras 0.

COCA-COLA 82—Elis 26, Williams 14, Avenido 13, Manalo 9, Ballesteros 9, Abuda 9, Antonio 2, Briones 0, Morano 0.

Quarters: 28-15, 42-32, 68-59, 90-82.

Blu nips Montaña; Hapee prevails

CEBU CITY—Blu Detergent Kings leaned on slotman Marlon Legaspi to nip Montaña Jewels, 67-66, and stay alive for a finals berth Saturday night in the First CBF-PBL Challenge Cup at the New Cebu Coliseum here.

The 6-foot-5 Legaspi, a former PBL rookie of the year, outclassed the Jewels in the shaded lane as he pumped in 27 points, including Blu's last three baskets which were enough to cushion Montaña's blistering finish.

Earlier, Hapee Toothpaste outgunned Granny Goose Tortillas, 92-77.

Blu and Hapee's victories created a four-way tie for the lead to turn Sunday's games into knockout affairs.

Winners will then advance to the best-of-seven championship series of the week-long meet held under the auspices of the PBL and Cebu Basketball Federation. *Dennis Eroa*

DE OCAMPO
18

RED Bull import Julius Nwosu (left) barrels into FedEx slotman Yancy de Ocampo.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

RP Open qualifying starts today

THE BATTLE for 10 slots in the Casino Filipino 87th Philippine Open Golf begins today at Villamor.

Fourteen of 26 entered are professionals, including Juanito Pagunsan, Randy Garalde and Jojo Cruz.

The RP Open, now a part of the Asian PGA Tour, is set for March 7-10 at Wack Wack.

Pagcor, through Casino Filipino, will bankroll Asia's oldest professional golf tournament, with San Miguel Beer as presentor and Mitsubishi the Open's official car.

Asia's best, including the Top 60 in the Order of Merit last year, are entered, led by defending champion Cassius Casas.

Joining the two-day qualifying rounds, aside from Calatagan's Tommy Manotoc from the amateur ranks, are Jong Laput, Solomon Gines, Jose Mari Hechnaova and Jun Bernis of Canlubang, Bobby Celestino of Riviera, Chester Calpotura of John Hay, Jenz Tecson of Southwoods, Roy Tolentino, Tony Santos, Dave Hernandez and Ronnie Torrecampo of Calatagan.

The other pros are Kunihiro Toyoda, Ruel Banares, Rodolfo Ardimer, Arnaldo Gomez, Richard Abaring, Rey Alo, Arturo Arda, Orlan Sumcad, Bong Brobio, Ric Borreta and Anthony Victoria.

"We reiterate our gratitude once again to Villamor for allowing us the use of their venue," said Comm. Danny Pizarro, tournament committee chair of the RP Open.

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Notre Dame vs Rutgers at 8 a.m. (r), NC State vs Duke at 10 a.m. (r), Northwestern vs Penn State at 1:30 p.m., Pittsburgh vs West Virginia at midnight (r) on ESPN

GOLF: PGA Nissan Open, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r – 10 p.m.) on Star Sports

Agile China Amateur Golf Tour 2001 Highlights at 5:30 p.m. on Star Sports

POOL: Mosconi Cup 2001 at 7 a.m. (r) on ESPN

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See posters for more details.

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Claim period shall be until 60 days from the date of notification and/or playing day.

HOW TO CLAIM PRIZES:
For GMA: Contestants and Home Partners can claim their prizes at Corplan, Inc., T2A Sunvar Plaza, Amorsolo St. cor. Pasay Rd.,Makati City.
For provincial areas: Key offices in major provincial cities.

Super karting tourney set

EXCITING karting action takes the limelight anew as the 2002 Shell Super Karting Series unfolds Feb. 23-24 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Focus will be on the Intercontinental Class-A where the young karters led by Tyson Sy, Mark Bumgarner, Michelle Bumgarner, Dado Peña and second Arthur Tuason Memorial Cup champion Batsy Agaboo will challenge 2001 Rookie of the Year and Formula SL champion Jerome Marquez for the crown.

But all eyes will be on defending champion Pepon Marave who's out to achieve a historic grand slam in the premiere Formula A class of this nine-leg series organized by Carmona Circuit Philippines and sponsored by Shell, Bridgestone, Nokia and Kart Plaza.

Among those expected to give Marave a tough fight for this year's crown are Arvin Drueco, Mandy Borja, Jess Garcia, Manuel Sy and Mike Tuason—the first Filipino ever to win the Asian Karting Championship.

Interested parties may call the Carmona Circuit Philippines office at 817-2241.

SPORTSWATCH

McGrady lifts Magic

HOUSTON—Tracy McGrady scored 39 points and had 12 rebounds to lead the Orlando Magic to a 109-100 victory Saturday night over the Houston Rockets. Darrell Armstrong scored 27, and Pat Garrity added 17 for Orlando, which never trailed. In other games, Cleveland downed Chicago, 114-101; Seattle ripped Boston, 99-79; and LA Clippers subdued Dallas, 119-110. *AP*

Scooter races up

MOTORCYCLE action goes to high gear as the Gearhead Moto Shop stages the first ever four-hour scooter endurance race on March 3 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. Participants will test their skills, stamina and team strategy in this gruelling four-hour competition sponsored by Shell Advance motorcycle oils, Bridgestone, Access Plus, 89.9 TM and 99.5 RTFM. "This exciting event will surely squeeze out the riders' energy, ingenuity and patience," said Gearhead Moto Shop organizer Philip Alvendia. For details, call up at 0917-8998029.

Venus faces Justine

ANTWERP, Belgium—Top-seeded American Venus Williams advanced to the final of the $585,000 WTA Diamond Games on Saturday, downing Amelie Mauresmo of France 7-6 (7), 6-0 in a hard-fought grudge match. Williams, who beat Mauresmo for the second time this year, will face second-seeded Belgian Justine Henin in Sunday's final. Henin, ranked No. 9 in the world, also advanced Sunday, defeating a surprisingly strong Patty Schnyder of Switzerland 1-6, 6-3, 6-4. *AP*

Retailers' tilt on

THE FIRST Burlington-Philippine Retailers Association Cup fired off Saturday at the RFM gym in Mandaluyong City. The inaugural tournament among retailers featured a men's basketball competition plus women's free-throw shooting and cheering squad contests. The 10-team league is composed of Kameraworld, Toby's Sports, Konica Photo Express, Jimac, Primer Group, Oceanic-Lhullier, GNC, Sportshouse, Mr. Quickie with Burlington as guest squad. The event is sponsored by Burlington socks.

Booing Kobe

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

THE 2002 NBA All-Star Game at Philadelphia's First Union Center lost some of its luster with the injury withdrawals of Vince Carter and Shaquille O'Neal, the top two leading vote-getters in the fan balloting, but the LA Lakers' wunderkind guard Kobe Bryant made up for their absence by knocking in a game-high 31points—the most in an All-Star contest since Michael Jordan scored 40 in 1988 and the first 30 points-or-more performance since MJ had 30 in 1993—in powering the West to a 135-120 shellacking of the East in a run-and-gun affair.

Then again, Kobe's heroics were not the biggest story from the game. It was the incessant booing of Bryant by the Philly crowd that stunned TV viewers around the globe.

For a city that prides itself as the City of Brotherly Love, 76ers supporters showed no love at all to Bryant even though he is a local product who grew up in Lower Merion, Pennsylvania and his father "Jelly Bean" Joe once played for the Sixers during the mid-1970s.

The fans' display of poor sportsmanship was disgusting.

While it's true Bryant hurt the feelings of Philly fans during last year's NBA Finals when the 6-7 do-it-all declared Los Angeles is now his home city (and no longer Philadelphia) and he was out to "cut the 76ers' hearts out" (the Lakers eventually whipped Philadelphia 4-1 to capture a second straight NBA title behind the solid play of O'Neal and Bryant), their rude behavior during a festive exhibition game like the All-Star was inexcusable.

It was not the first time the Philly crowd was hostile to an opponent during the entire All-Star proceedings last February 9-10.

Derby bets submission under way

THE SUBMISSION of all official entries to the 5th UCAP/Arnis Master 7-Cock Derby is today (Feb. 18) from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and washout Shampoo.

Hosted by popular sportsman Raymond, the derby is slated at 5 p.m. tomorrow and on Thursday. At least 40 participants are seeing action tomorrow, according to Velayo.

Meanwhile, the United Cockers Association of the Philippines will conduct a month-long screening of cockerels for the entire month of March only. There will be no extension.

Hotelier-sportsman Biboy Enriquez, chair of the UCAP screening committee, said the screening is in preparation for the coming stag derbies (September and October) at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Interested parties may get in touch with Ms Vicky D. Bugayong at Tel. Nos. 928-7582, 924-5051 to 71 and 0917-6148354 or 0919-5185899.

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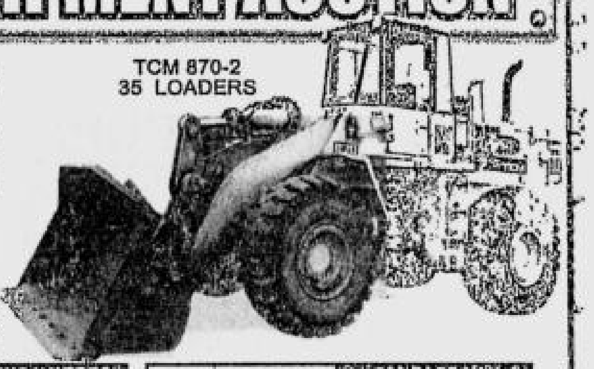
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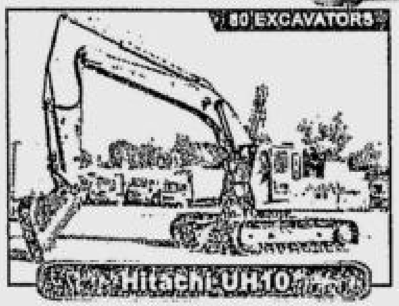
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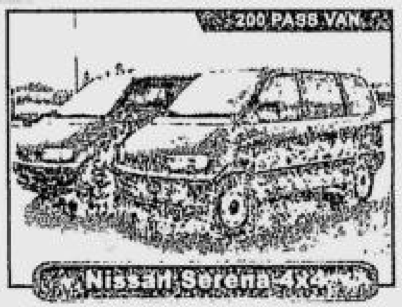
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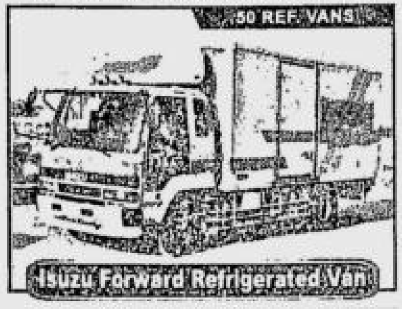
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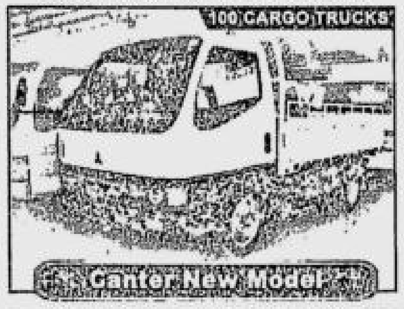
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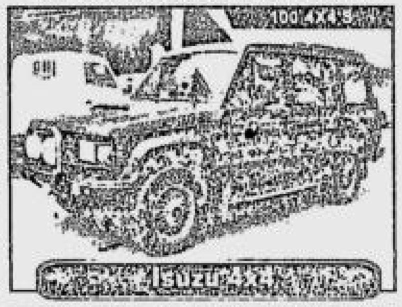
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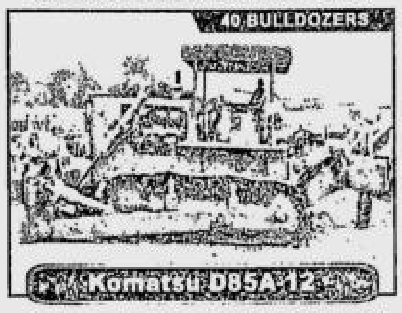
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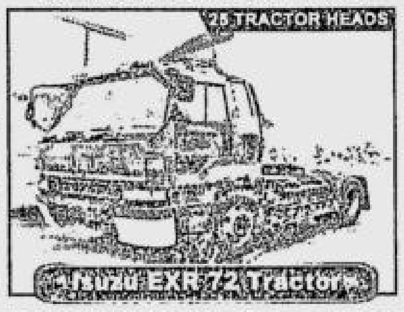
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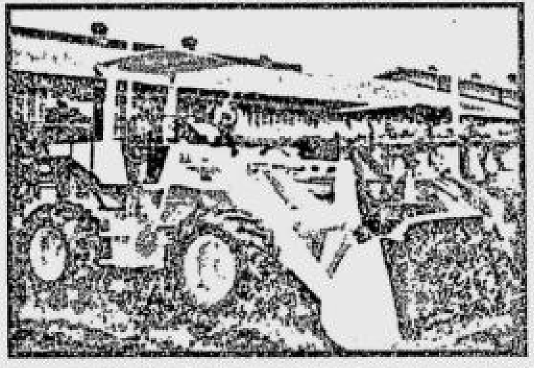

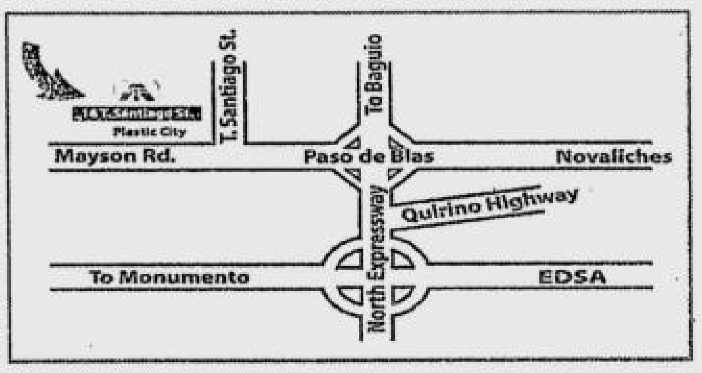
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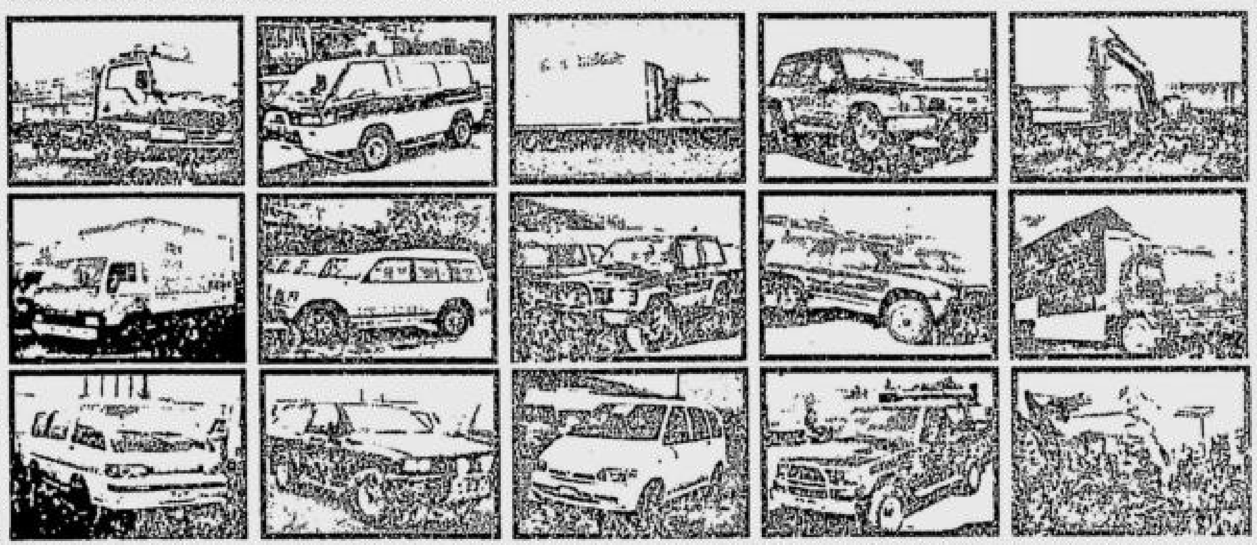

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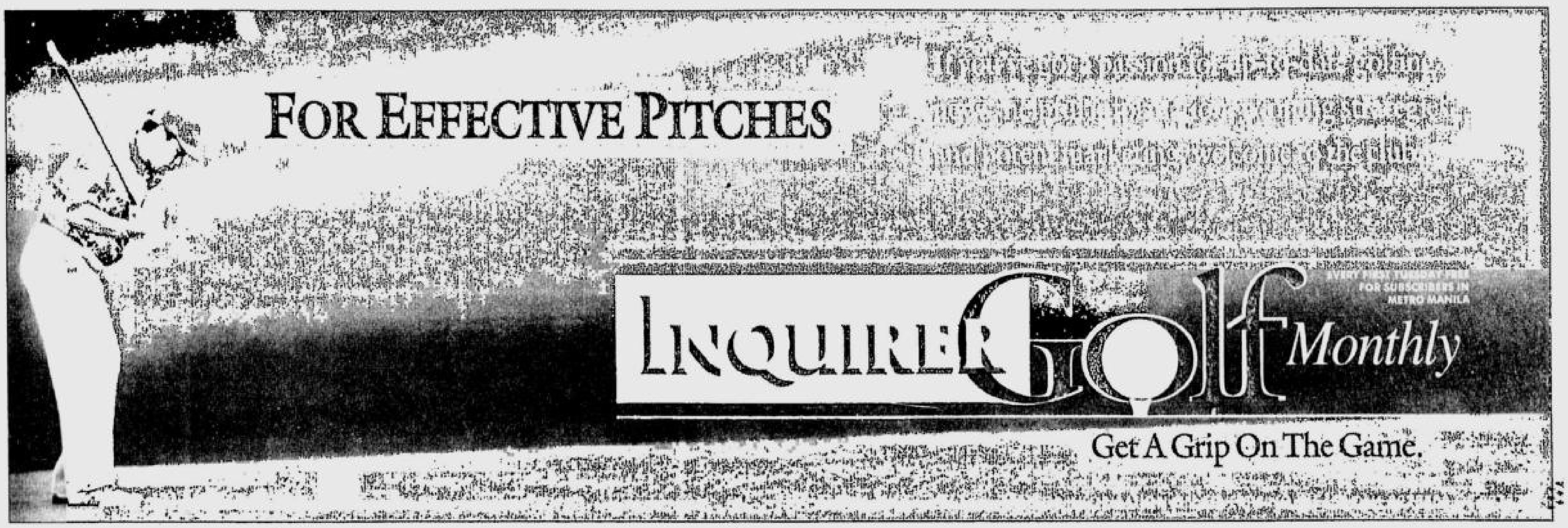
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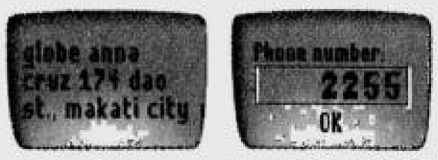

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▩ Pasay rejects applications for new clubs /A26
▩ Rob victim runs over suspect /A26
▩ Bare Eye: A letter to the President of the Republic /A20

METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Church groups vs Taguig casino

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE construction of a hotel-casino at the Global City in Taguig is facing staunch opposition from local church groups, which vowed to fight a war against "evil."

About 80 church groups, consisting mostly of Born Again, Methodist, Baptist, and Catholic organizations, yesterday threatened to stage mass actions to pressure the municipal government into junking the plan.

The hotel-casino is supposed to rise at a 5.1-hectare property, which the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. donated to Taguig.

According to the groups, an ordinance called "Moral Uprightness Program of Taguig 2001" mandates a municipal policy, which bans the "operation or entry of any legal gambling casino or government controlled casinos" including the "selling of pornographic materials, showing of pornographic movies and other obscene and lewd shows or activities."

The local government "should look for other means to woo tourists and investments," said Archie de Villa, head of the Alliance of God's Ambassadors and Pastors (Agap).

De Villa noted that the cities of Makati and Mandaluyong achieved progress without casinos.

Agap urged Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga to explicitly reject the construction of the hotel-casino by writing a letter to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Last week, Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano made a similar appeal, but a spokesperson of Tinga claimed that the mayor did not have to issue a letter since "he has openly opposed" the project.

But De Villa and members of the United Opposition of Taguig Against Casino are wary that this "assurance" might not be enough to block the controversial plan, which also faces opposition from militant and other cause-oriented organizations.

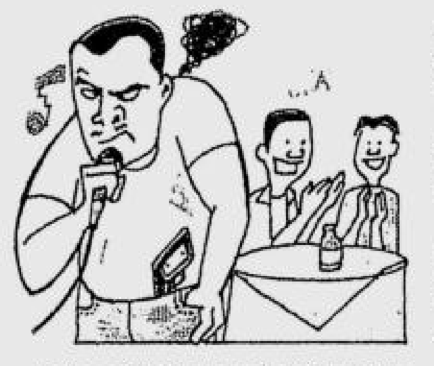
De Villa's group also threatened to barricade a portion of the Global City in Fort Bonifacio to prevent the construction of the hotel-casino.

Despite the ordinance that prohibits the operation of casinos in Taguig, a "mysterious" municipal council resolution authorizing the construction of a hotel-casino at the Global City has surfaced, according to De Villa. But the supposed resolution did not show the name of its sponsor, he said.

He said he and his group suspect that there are people trying to circumvent the existing ordinance so that a casino could be built in Taguig.

Another man shot dead over 'My Way'

By Philip C. Tubeza



THE SONG "My Way" has claimed another life.

Jofre Valente, 26, was shot dead for clapping as criminology student Jose L. Manuel Jr., 21, sang the Frank Sinatra song off-key on Saturday at the Honey Joy Videoke bar on Arlegui Street in Quiapo, Manila, said Detective Virgo Villareal of the Western Police District homicide Section.

Valente died after Manuel shot him thrice, police said. Both men lived in Quiapo.

Valente's friend Albert A. Javier, 24, also of Quiapo, suffered two gunshot wounds in the leg, police said.

Two hours after the shooting, police arrested Manuel, but his two male companions escaped.

Police said Valente and Javier went to the videoke bar at about 11:30 p.m. on Saturday and took a table next to Manuel and his companions.

When Manuel sang "My Way" out of tune, Valente and Javier clapped their hands, which insulted Manuel, police said.

Valente went to the toilet and was followed by two two men from Manuel's group, one of whom punched him in the chest, police said.

To avoid more trouble, Valente and Javier left the bar, but Manuel's group apparently left earlier and waited for them, police said.

Valente and Javier were walking along Arlegui Street when Manuel and his companions blocked their path, police said. Manuel shot Valente thrice and then shot Javier twice, police said.

The suspects escaped after the shooting while the victims were brought to the Philippine General Hospital, where Valente died while undérgoing surgery.

Manuel was arrested after an informant called up the WPD headquarters at 6:30 a.m. and identified him as one of the suspects, police said. The informant also told police where Manuel could be found.

Police arrested Manuel on Nepomuceno Street, also in Quiapo.

At the WPD headquarters, Javier identified Manuel as the one who shot him and Valente, police said.

Starlet's dad wants her imprisoned for playing sexy roles

THE father of a movie starlet has asked the Quezon City Regional Trail Court to put in jail his 17-year-old daughter for appearing in exploitative bold movies that showed her in several stages of nudity.

Ma. Theresa Bovick Tambis, faces imprisonment of not more than 30 days as a disciplinary measure provided under Article 223 of the Family Code, according to a statement sent by a group of lawyers called Buklod ng mga Abogadong Tagapagtaguyod ng Adhikaing Sambayanan (Batas).

Tambis uses the screen name Aleck Bovick.

Her talent managers Ihman Sturco and Coco Semo, and Tri Vision Cinema, producers of her movies "Kaulayaw" and "Tampisaw," face jail terms of not less than eight years for violation of Republic Act No. 7610 or the Anti-Child Abuse Law, Batas said.

In his complaint, engineer Aurelio P. Tambis Jr. of Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, also asked the court to stop the showing of the two movies.

"Kaulayaw" is showing in second-run movie houses in Metro Manila, but "Tampisaw" has yet to be shown.

Tambis said in his complaint that Bovick, who was born on May 18, 1984 in Quezon City, left home last November. He said his search for her led him to defendants Sturco and Semo, who he said conspired with Tri Vision Cinema to bring his daughter to certain places in Ilocos to shoot the two movies.

Still shots taken from the movies and other publicity photos show Bovick in various stages of nudity, Tambis said in his complaint. He said the story lines of both movies also exploited her body.

Tambis said his daughter is now living in a condominium on Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City, and defendants Sturco and Semo share the same address.

Bovick's mother Cristina died in 1987 when Bovick was only 3, Tambis said. He said she and her older siblings lived with him in his house in Mandaluyong. Bovick barely managed to graduate from high school and preferred to live "a reckless life," according to Tambis, who claimed he was strict with his daughter.

Marikina goes after tricycles

By Nelson F. Flores

MARIKINA Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando, in a bid to ease the traffic situation in the city, yesterday threatened to fine commuters who patronize colorum or illegal tricycles.

Fernando made the threat as she directed traffic policemen and enforcers to strictly enforce City Ordinance No. 266 S-2000 that bans colorum tricycles from the city's streets.

She said that under the law, commuters who patronize illegal tricycles could be fined or made to do community service. The driver can also lose his license.

Fernando said she is "not against people who want to earn decent money but only those who violate the law."

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Pasay rejects applications for new clubs

By Christian V. Esguerra

NIGHTCLUBS, karaoke bars and pub houses will now be limited to Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City to erase the city's image as a "sin city," according to Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Citing a two-year-old "personal policy," Trinidad yesterday said he has been refusing permits to businessmen wanting to establish nightclubs and similar pubs outside the Roxas Boulevard area.

The boulevard has long been famous for its nightclubs, earning for Pasay City such labels as "sin cxity" or red-light district.

Trinidad said the backbone of the policy is the comprehensive land use plan, an expanded version of the city's zoning ordinance that aims to establish "harmony."

"I don't want people to build a house and wake up one day to find out that there's already a karaoke bar beside their house," the mayor said.

So far, he has rejected at least 20 applications for business permits for the construction of nightclubs, including sauna baths, on the Roxas strip, according to Trinidad.

If applicants really want to put up businesses in the area, he tries to convince them to invest instead in restaurants that do not have guest relations officers and loud karaoke equipment, he said.

In the case of existing nightclubs outside Roxas Boulevard, Trinidad said he has no choice but to renew their business permits since their owners have already invested in these businesses.

Rob victim runs over suspect

By Nelson F. Flores

A TAXI driver whom four men robbed got even when he drove after them as they fled, running over one of them late Saturday night in Pasig City.

Injured was Diego Corpin, 20, of Broadway Street, Quezon City, police said. He was treated at the Rizal Medical Center for a broken leg.

Arrested were cousins Efren Corpin, 20, and Diosdado Victoria, 21, both residents of Broadway also. An ice pick, a handgun and P2,000 cash were seized from them, police said.

Another suspect, Louie Mercado, 18, escaped, police said.

PO2 Eleuterio Fernandez said the four men boarded the taxi driven by Serbeato Capampangan, 59, in Cubao, Quezon City, and asked to be taken to Angono, Rizal. On Legaspi Street in Barangay Maybunga in Pasig, the passengers announced the holdup.

Capampangan gave them his P2,000 earnings and the suspects started walking away. When they were already a few meters away, Capampangan drove his cab toward them and hit Diego Corpin.

The others started running but a mob cornered Efren Corpin and Victoria inside the L.G. Collings factory, police said. Security guards stopped the beating and turned over the two men to police.

A letter to the President of the Republic

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

COPIES of the letter below were furnished responsible government and military officials. The original was sent to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo but the sender feared "we do not have the assurance that she could receive it."

An extra copy was mailed to the INQUIRER with the hope of having the letter published so it could catch the attention of some concerned government officials or crusaders. Please share the rather disturbing contents of the letter:

***

Dear Madam President:

First of all, allow me and the whole family to greet Your Excellency a very pleasant day and to wish you good health.

Madam, we write this letter as our last recourse in our quest for justice in the brutal killing of our dear brother, Navy Commander Nestor G. Fernando 07673, PN, GSC, who was shot dead on May 27, 1998 right inside his office at the Joint Command and Staff College in Camp Aguinaldo.

It is almost four years since the incident happened. The wheels of justice grind too slowly and the resolution of the case seems to us farfetched and illusory.

At the time of his death, Cdr. Fernando, the Baron of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1978, of which the Honorable President is an adopted member, was investigating anomalies involving projects implemented by the JCSC. The officials who may have participated in the anomalies wanted him silenced so as to clear and erase all traces of evidence and leads.

The killing, we strongly believe, was driven by excessive anger and motivated by the sense of self-preservation. The fear of losing one's job and the prospect of going behind bars, the ignominy of unfolding the scam to the public, were enough to fuel the satanic instinct.

***

The incident happened under the command of RADM Octavius Dauz and his deputy Col. Edgar Calvo. But RADM Dauz was allowed to retire without even an administrative case filed against him on the ground of command responsibility. Col. Calvo, who was designated project-in-charge, had a series of heated arguments with Cdr. Fernando because the latter refused to sign documents needed for the release of payments to contractors who happened to be "friends" of Col. Calvo. Cdr. Fernando found the projects to be anomalous and irregular and thus decided to conduct an investigation in his capacity as chief of intelligence and operations of the JCSC.

During the term of Honorable Orlando Mercado as secretary of defense, Assistant Secretary Ruben Carranza conducted a series of hearings on the case. Although the family and lawyer of Cdr. Fernando were allowed to attend the hearings, they were not allowed to talk. They were there as "observers" only.

***

The senseless killing of Cdr. Fernando by people from within the organization raises a question on the degree of discipline the prestigious PMA imparted and infused in the system of every cadet. It now appears, save for a few, that the institution is also a hatchery for crooked and corrupt military and police leaders. These are the leaders that conspired to end the life of an idealistic officer, Cdr. Nestor G. Fernando.

We often read in the newspapers about the President directing the police or the NBI to conduct investigations on the killings of suspected criminals or kidnappers, such as the Kuratong Baleleng case. Unfortunately, the case of Cdr. Fernando, a righteous and dedicated officer who was considered one of the best in the AFP, is being ignored and neglected.

All our brother had wanted to do was put an end to anomalies and irregularities which have eroded the image of the military and the police. We have sought the help of so many officials and agencies of the government but all our efforts yielded negative results. Some parties did not even bother to respond to our pleas.

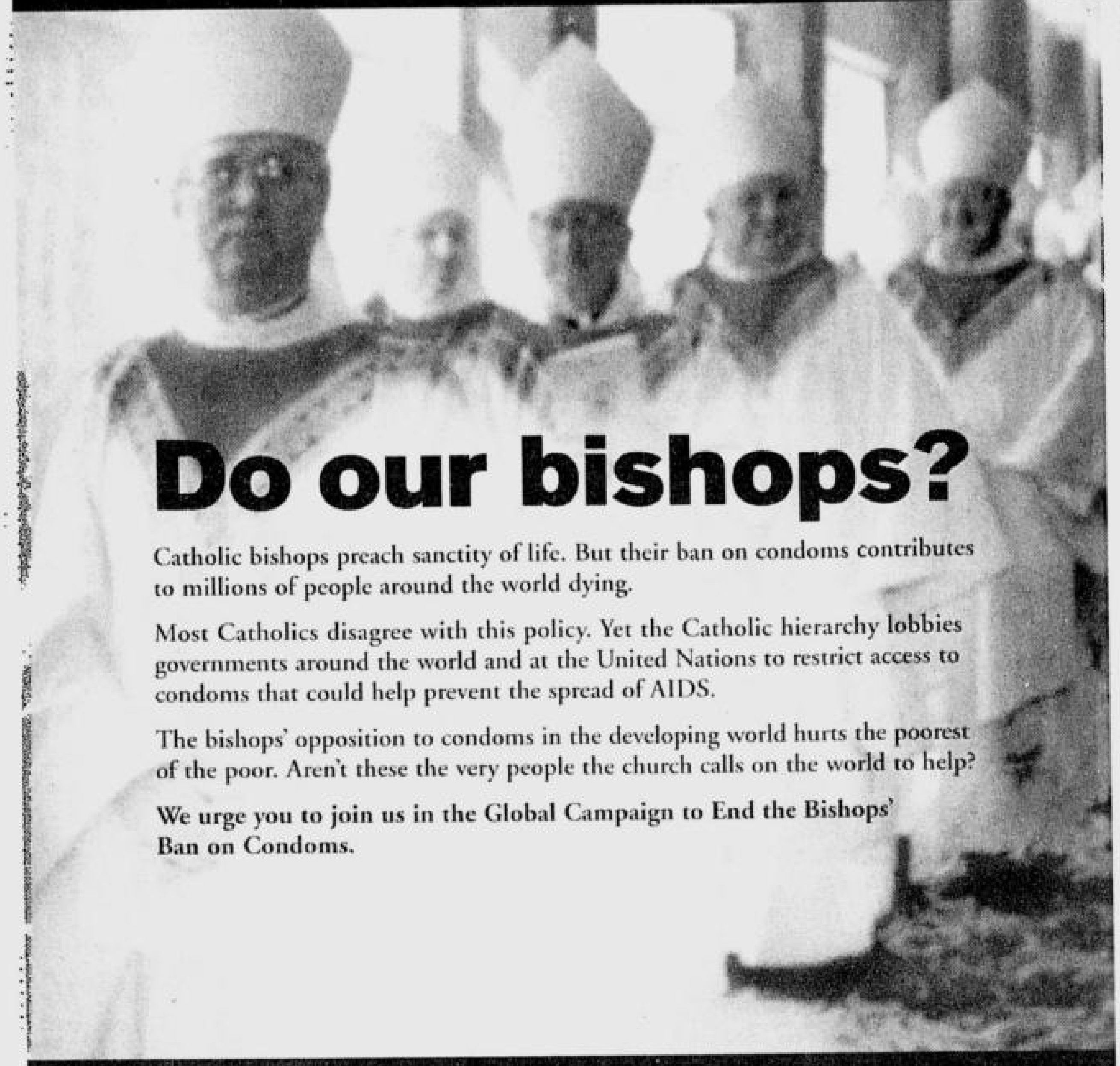
Restoring the image of the military and the police, Madam President, is still possible. The early resolution of the Fernando case will no doubt provide a very good start.

We pray that the death of Cdr. Nestor G. Fernando will not be in vain.

Thank you very much and we hope our plea will not again fall on deaf ears. More power and God bless us all. — *Efren Fernando, AFH Security Agency, 917 Pioneer St., Davao City*

CROWNING GRACE

Grace Lee, 19, is crowned this year's Miss Chinatown Manila by Mayor Lito Atienza at the Manila Hotel Friday night. Love Suntay (right) is first runnerup and Tanyan Yuquimpo is second runnerup. Lee was also Miss Photogenic, Miss Friendship and Best in Cheongsam. At left is Councilor Miles Roces, executive committee chair of the Chinatown Development Authority.



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1 (DTS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 (DTS)	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
4 GOLD (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY
6 GOLD (SDDS)	KATE & LEOPOLD
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS
8	IKAW LAMANG .
9	IKAW LAMANG .
10	FROM HELL

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVED
2	
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	IKAW LAMANG
2	FROM HELL
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	KAULAYAW

METROPOLIS star
Tel. 850 4285

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2	ISANG PANAGINIP
3	IKAW LAMANG .
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	KAULAYAW
6	VANILLA SKY
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) Tel. 7512010 to 13

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	FINAL ANSWER

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVED
2	HALIK SA LUPA
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
A	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG
3	RESERVED
4	KAULAYAW

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8508

1 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	
3	
4	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
5	FROM HELL
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .
7 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8 (SDDS)	RIDING IN CARS
9 (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	IKAW LAMANG

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3	ISANG PANAGINIP
4 (SDDS)	RIDING IN CARS
5	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
6 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	KAULAYAW
9	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3	KAULAYAW
4	ISANG PANAGINIP
5 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
6	IKAW LAMANG . .
7 (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS
8	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	IKAW LAMANG
2	KAULAYAW
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
5 (SDDS)	VANILLA SKY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	IKAW LAMANG

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	IKAW LAMANG

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	HALIK SA LUPA
Lords	HALIK SA LUPA
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 , 533.3856

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	IKAW LAMANG

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
3	KAULAYAW
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	RESERVE

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	IKAW LAMANG .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG .

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	REBULOSYONARYO
2 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG . .
3 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	HEARTS IN ATLANTIC

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	IKAW LAMANG.
2 (DOLBY)	HEARRTS IN ATLANTIC
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	IKAW LAMANG

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	FINAL ANSWER
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 METRO TOWN
TEL. (045) 9821729 (Tarlac)

1	IKAW LAMANG .
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN
3 (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY
4 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
3	KAULAYAW
4 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HEARTS IN ATLANTIC
2	IKAW LAMANG .
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	KAULAYAW
5	HUSTLER

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	KAULAYAW

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2556

1	IKAW LAMANG .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	KAULAYAW

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	IKAW LAMANG .
3	AMERICAN ADOBO

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	HUSTLER
3	RESERVE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4008

1 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG .
2 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KAULAYAW
2	IKAW LAMANG .
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

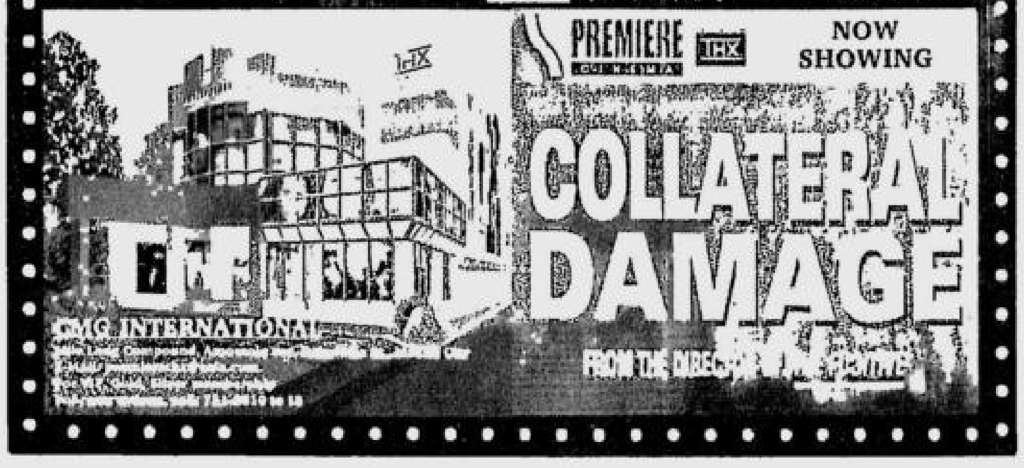
1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	MAY PAGIBIG PA KAYA
3	THE OTHERS
4	IKAW LAMANG

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SPY GAME
2	IKAW LAMANG .
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 (DTS EX)	ZOOLANDER

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS



MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

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galleria
633-9115-16 /633-7641 loc. 279

1 THX	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	IKAW LAMANG . . .
6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7	KATE & LEOPOLD
8	IKAW LAMANG . . .
9	FROM HELL
10	BLACK HAWK DOWN

ermita
536-7809 to 12

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	VANILLA SKY
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	KATE & LEOPOLD
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

metro east -PASIG
682-8193 / 3030

1	RIDING IN CARS
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	IKAW LAMANG. . .
4	KATE & LEOPOLD
5	FROM HELL
6	IKAW LAMANG. . .
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	VANILLA SKY

novaliches
935-3229 to 30

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	BLACK HAWK DOWN
5	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
6	KATE & LEOPOLD
7	IKAW LAMANG . . .
8	IKAW LAMANG . . .

imus
(046) 471-8188

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	IKAW LAMANG . . .
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .

bacolod
(034) 441-0433 / 0439

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	ISANG PANAGINIP
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
6	FINAL ANSWER

iloilo
(033) 336-8077 / 8078

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	AMERICAN ADOBO
5	MAY PAG IBIG PA KAYA
6	BLACK HAWK DOWN

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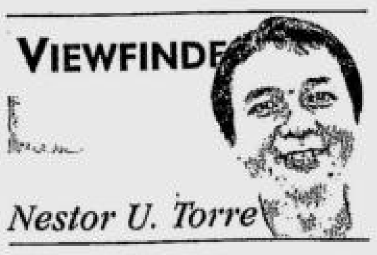
Love finds a way



VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"KATE and Leopold" is a Valentine movie reminiscent of "Somewhere in Time," but with a decidedly brighter, less morose feel to it. Once again, the stellar lovers are separated by many years, and yet love finds a way to bridge and even transcend time.

Hugh Jackman is the Duke of Albany (New York) in the 18th century, and he's on the verge of unhappily committing himself to a wealthy young woman he doesn't love—the only way he can refill his titled family's empty coffers.

Suddenly, he espies an interloper who turns out to have come from the 21st century. In the ensuing chase, he falls off a towering pier of the Brooklyn bridge (which is still being built at the time), and finds himself in New York City today.

From Albany to the Big Apple is quite a jolting journey for the duke, who is stunned to discover that his once bucolic dukedom has become so crowded, dangerous—and loud!

Thank goodness, he meets a young woman (**Meg Ryan**) who manages to captivate his heart despite her often being too modern and tough for comfort. But he learns to understand her quirks, and for her part, his courtly ways help her relax and open her harried, hurried heart to love.

That takes some doing, because she is completely work-oriented and success-obsessed. Her dream is to get appointed senior vice president of her advertising firm—and yet, when she finally gets what she wants, she finds herself wondering if this is where her future truly lies.

Could it be that her future lies—in the past?

That's the movie's provocative theme, and the answer doesn't just come to bear on Ryan's life, but also opens viewers' eyes to a new way of defining what "love" and "forever" mean.

As the movie explains it, the interloper (Ryan's former boyfriend) has found a "portal" from past to present, and back again. This sounds scientifically unlikely, but the film "thinks" with its heart, so everything turns out to be possible, even if it isn't very plausible.

On point of storytelling, the film is generally interesting and empathetic, but it sometimes feels slow, especially when it goes into unproductive detours like the duke being tapped to be a TV spokesperson for a product that Ryan's outfit is shilling.

Also, despite the fact that she's an expert at romantic-comedy movies like this, Ryan's performance here feels a bit tired. She's been at it since "Sleepless in Seattle," so maybe, just maybe, she should give this film format a rest?

Since he's newer at this, Jackman does better and comes off as a fresh performer. His duke character here is very different from his past roles, but he does justice to it, making good use of the training in classical acting that he's gotten from all of his years of working in the theater.

'Doble Vista'

WRITER-painter **Llita Logarta** and freelance writer **Angge Goloy** are holding their joint exhibit, "Doble Vista," at the Discovery Suites from Feb. 18 to 22.

The show will feature Llita's watercolors of flowers and landscapes, and Angge's pictures of nature scenes. Guests of honor at the opening cocktails on Feb. 18 are Sen. **Loren Legarda**, **Lourdes Talag-Echauz**, **Niles Perlas**, **Eugenia D. Apostol**, **Manny Pangilinan**, **Reynaldo G. Alejandro**, **Ruben Tiu**, **Annabel Wisnewski** and Discovery Suites general manager **Jack Tuason**.

Discovery Suites is at 25 ADB ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

The theater that is Fritz Ynfante

From page A31

Diana Ross at that instant that I need a Diana Ross, but when I need a hooker for "Big Spender," your Diana Ross character ends. That's difficult because they live that character and they dress up for that.

How have the actors fared so far?

It's amazing. Bahaghari even invested in dance classes for the performers. They took up jazz, hip-hop and modern dance.

James Cooper, who is our image consultant for the show, is doing a cameo. That's why he's trying to lose weight. He cannot eat.

Ernest Santiago, too. He came up to me all the way from Pagsanjan and said, "Fritz, I want to have a role. I will do my own outfit." His only request is that he wants to be Glenn Close in "Sunset Boulevard" and to sing "As If We Never Said Goodbye." He probably wants to relive his Coco Banana days.

The performers will only lip-synch?

Yes, because it will be more expensive if we make them sing live. We have to do musical arrangements and we have to get a live band. So when you see Diana Ross, it's Diana Ross' voice. When it's Tina Turner, you'll hear Tina Turner. But we'll capture all the nuances and mannerisms of the performers.

The original Dolly ("Hello Dolly") onstage was Carol Channing and that means a lot of contortions.

Do you know that doing lip-synch is tiring? Eventually, you have to massage your jaw. You can even have lockjaw after performing.

You also have to know how to breathe for the phrasing of the songs. It is so hard.

The black divas portion is so stunning. We have Whitney Houston, Tina Turner, Gloria Gaynor, Mariah Carey, Diana Ross.

What market do you want to attract?

Carmita Francisco (of Bahaghari): Boy Abunda told us the market is really changing. There's a very small A market out there. It's really down to the C now. The yuppies and the Gen-X also want to be entertained. Look at Martin Nievera. He filled up Onstage in all his 10 or 20 performances.

But why give them a show with impersonations?

Fritz: I feel our local impersonators are so talented, they can give the foreign ones a run for their money anytime. They've been performing in this *pipitsugin* shows and not in the right venue.

So if you give them a venue in a legitimate theater and all the values of production, like better costumes, good lighting, stage, they will shine even more. So we have to take them out of that plain and raise them to a higher plateau.

Are the impersonators getting good pay for this show?

Absolutely!

Will this show do anything for the gay community?

I believe so. I know there's still homophobia around, even if gays are in the media, the fashion and entertainment industries, the banks and top corporations.

Even the story that we weave is a microcosm of all of us. We can empathize and relate to the characters. The performers were discriminated upon even by their own family members. Like one of them was treated like a second son because he has effeminate tendencies. But when he graduated from school, he was summa cum laude. But when he applied to teach, there was this homophobic tendency from the administration of the school. He was not given the job. He said he had to feed his brothers and sisters, so that was when he resorted to being a *mujer* performer.

We don't want the gays ridiculed in those cheap venues, including the *ferias* or the town plazas. They become meat for amusement. That's what we want to remove. Television has done a great disservice to homosexuals who are stereotyped and treated as nothing but a piece of amusement. They are the *manicuristas* and source of gossip.

Are you saying that gays will be respected after this show?

I want them to be given a certain sense of respect as decent and productive human beings, even those who are transsexuals. In the production, we have two transsexuals and one is engaged to an American.

Do you really think live shows are in these days?

Yes, because people are now tired of the movies. How much does a movie cost, P80 or P100? And you can even buy pirated VCDs, so why pay that much?

Friends of mine have seen "Vanilla Sky" and "Black Hawk Down" before they were shown in theaters. Of course, the reproduction is bad, but for some, it doesn't matter. And in a year or two, the movies are already on HBO.

Now, the audience is more discriminating. Live shows have improved. There's more substance and production values have been improved, with better lights, better sound.

"Illusione" seems to have a very big budget.

Carmita: If you want quality, you have to put in money.

Fritz: That's why they are already *galit* with me.

What inspired you to do this kind of show?

Carmita: Margie Moran and I used to be so fascinated with the talents of the impersonators. But we were turned off with all those loud shows because they were a bit crass and there was no control. So we thought, let's elevate this kind of show to a different level.

Who's doing the set design?

Fritz: I designed it, but Rico Ancheta is constructing it. It's very minimalist. It's not heavy sets. We'll do with something that can fly out or push in.

Eric Pineda is doing the costumes.

How many times was the script revised?

Only twice. Roy and I worked so long, way before he became famous as a scriptwriter, way before Chito Roño got him.

But Roy is so uncanny. He sits there and I tell him, this is my concept. I describe to him what I want brought out, without exactly telling him the words that I want to use. He has this little notebook that he can put in his breast pocket and he just listens and take down notes, no input. Then he tells me, give me a week. When he gives me the script, it's as if I wrote it.

He's a totally boring character and he's straight.

Douglas Nierras also knows what I want. I have worked with so many choreographers in the past because I've been doing musicals since time immemorial. But since Douglas came into my life, he sees what I want. We've been working for 10 years already. I'm the godfather of Powerdance which was born in the show I used to direct, "Shades," with Randy Santiago.

I'm not a dance director. I'm a technical man. I know the techniques, but I don't know the counts, the measures, variations or dance phrases.

I tell Douglas I want this number like this, I want the dancers like this, this is the mood I want. Even the costumes, I talk to him about the clothes I see.

I'm a very visual person. I'm not very good at writing. You ask me to submit a concept and I write it, it's *pangit*. But if I verbalize it, it's exciting.

Are you always this excited about your work?

I love the process. I love anything I do, thank God. He gave me a special gift. He gave me a third eye. When I listen to the music, I see the measurements. I can easily visualize. I see when the artists should enter or exit.

What was your last big stage production?

Last October, Judy Araneta-Roxas got me to direct a show for the alumni homecoming of Assumption, "Velada," with ladies from 30 to 80, all spoiled brats. I was going bananas.

What is your state of mind now?

I'm totally exhilarated.

Do others find you *mayabang*?

I used to be *mayabang* in the late '60s.

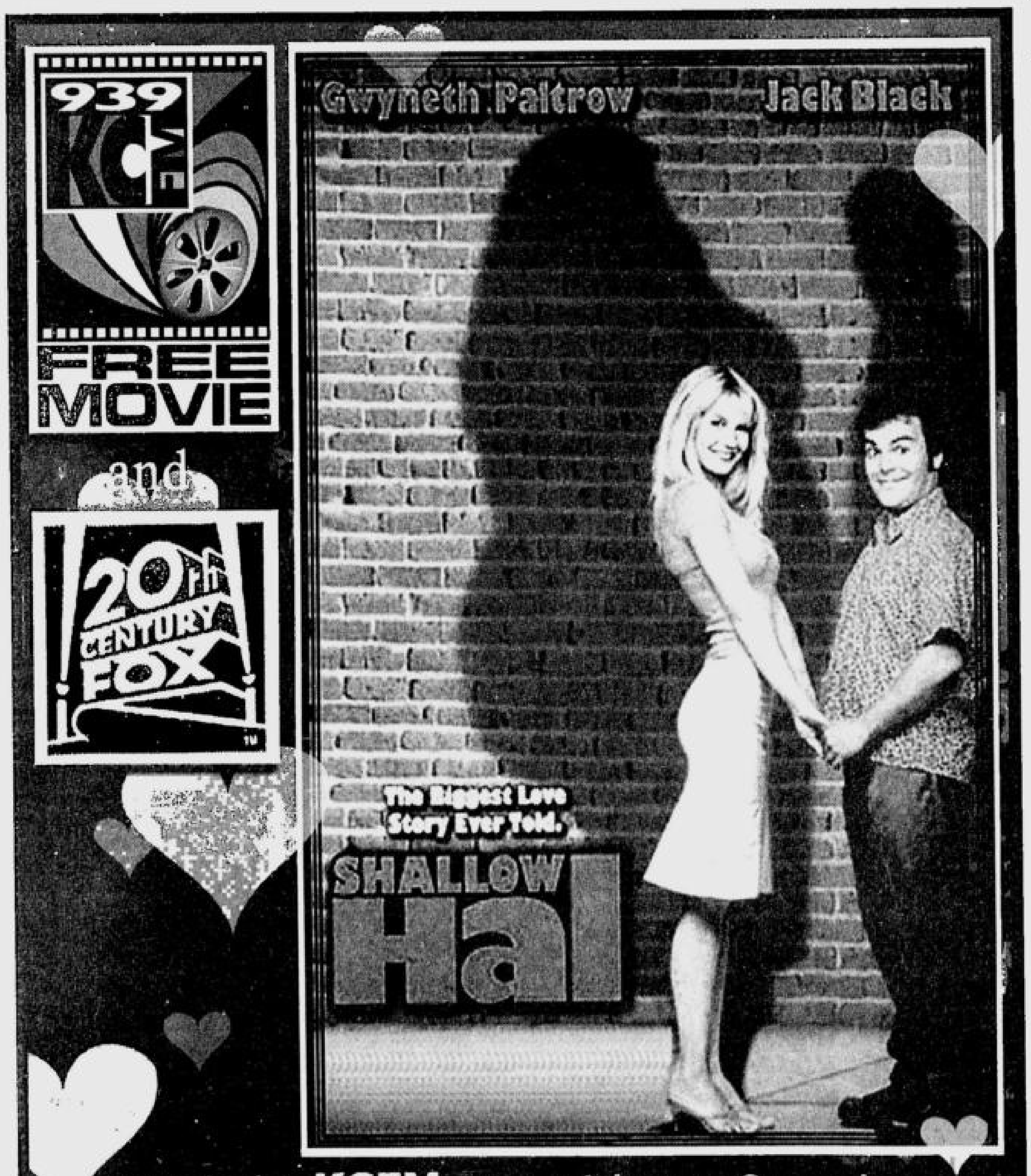
Aren't you *mayabang* now?

Mayabang is when you don't know what you're doing or saying. As a matter of fact, I told my other producer, Niña Romualdez, "You are working with a genius."

How many directors in this country hold an MA in film or TV from a school of directing?

THE THEATER/ A29

> **Are you always this excited about your work?**
>
> I love the process. I love anything I do, thank God. He gave me a special gift. He gave me a third eye



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Feb. 18, 2002 (Monday) 7:00 PM
SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 1

Watch TRUE FAITH live in the
KCFM Live It Up Live with Shallow Hal Mall Show
at the SM MEGAMALL ACTIVITY CENTER at 4 p.m. today.

The secret behind 'FPJ 2002' . . .

From page A30

Roselle always around

ROSELLE Nava has no illusions of being a singing superstar, but she has a steadily rising career and she is always visible in the entertainment scene.

"I may not be on top but I'm still here," she says.

Since "Ang TV" 10 years ago, Roselle has never left the public eye, even when she was finishing her marketing management course at De La Salle University.

"It was a sacrifice on my part," Roselle says. "It was hard especially when there were exams. But my family and friends were behind me. I was delayed for two terms, but I managed to finish my course."

It has taken Roselle three years to make a new album. Her last musical outing was "Simply Roselle," which was certified gold when it was released in 1999.

Roselle had her first album which spawned the hits "Bakit Nga Ba Mahal Kita?" and the revival of **Basil Valdez's** "You" when she was only 18.

Roselle returns with her third album, "All About Love," from Star Records. She gets the privilege of working with top songwriters. **Soc Villanueva** and **Arnel de Pano** composed the carrier track, "Huwag Ka Nang Babalik," a girl's plea to her former love never to come back or she'll fall for him again.

Lisa Diy and **Chat Zamora** wrote "Open," while **Vehnee Saturno** penned "Kung Alam Mo Lang."

Larry Hermoso, who gave Roselle her first hit, "Bakit Nga Ba . . ." contributed "Naiiyak Muli."

Roselle revives a **David Pomeranz** original, "Love Me Tonight." She also tries her hand at songwriting with "Bakit Ba," about a relationship which didn't work out.

"It was inspired by the romance of my close friend who broke up with her boyfriend of six years," Roselle offers. "I felt her pain after their separation and that inspired me to write a song."

Roselle will do a mall tour and provincial shows. She will visit Riverbank Marikina on Feb. 24, SM North Edsa on March 2, Robinson's Place Manila on March 8, SM Megamall on March 9, SM Sucat on March 15 and SM Southmall on March 16.

On March 1, she will hold a solo concert at Ratsky's on Morato in Quezon City.

This year is expected to be a busy one for Roselle. She even got offers to do a concert tour of the United States and Canada later this year.

Irreverent

MY FRIENDS and I caught the one-night show of Gladys and the Boxers With K, "Valentine Ka Dyan," at the Music Museum Friday night. However, midway into the performance, we were turned off when the group's antics bordered on the blasphemous.

A friend of the performers who was in the audience that night was celebrating her birthday. Gladys and the Boxers With K spoofed "Ave Maria" and raised their hands to sing for her. What made it irreverent was when Kakai, who is the "K" in the group, started ranting passages from the Bible as if spoofing an evangelist.

From then on, it was downhill as far as we were concerned.

The group members undoubtedly have great voices and they are a talented lot. But we didn't find their spiels funny.

What saved the show was the spot number of comedian **John Lapuz**, who sent the audience into stitches with her Assunta de Horsie act. John was downright funny from the moment he came on stage. He also did hilarious dance numbers spoofing dancing queens **Vilma Santos**, **Alma Moreno** and **Charlene Gonzales**.

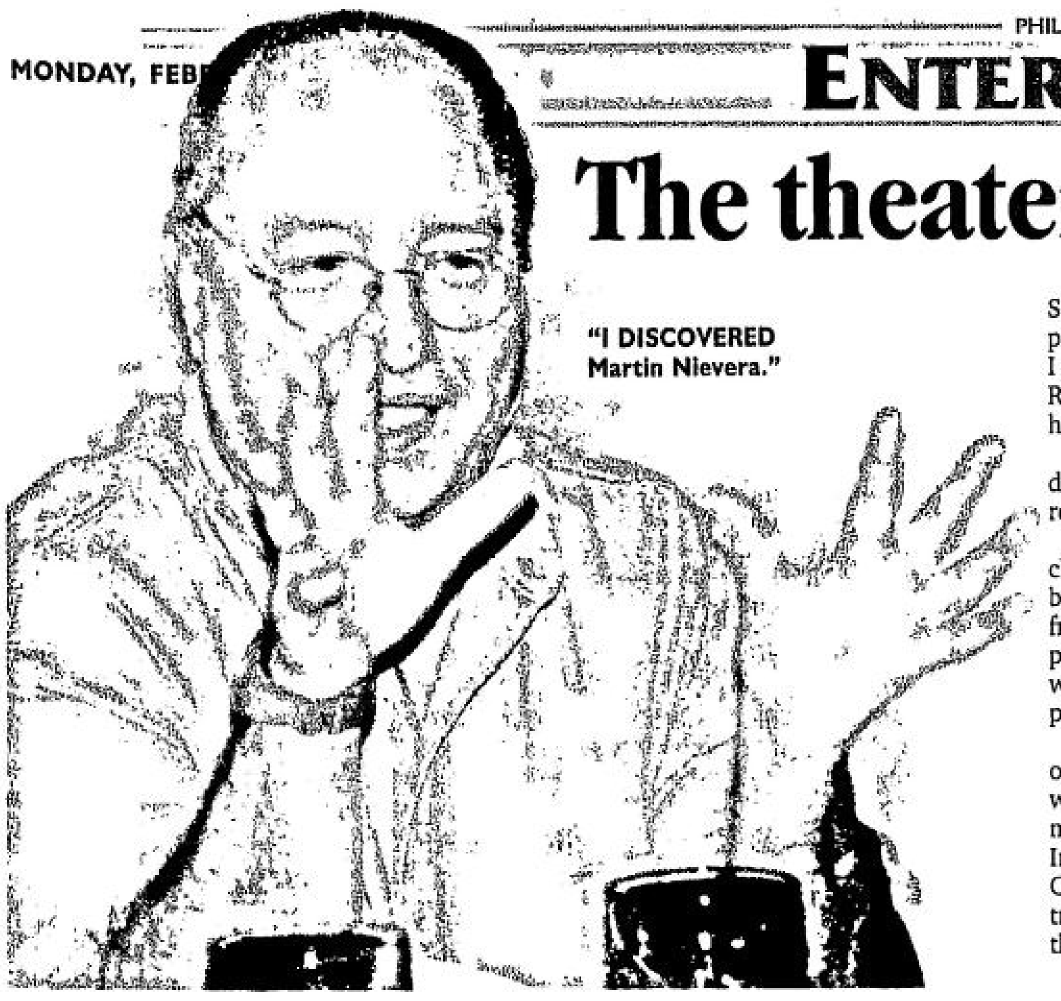
When he did his own choreographed movements, complete with back-breaking somersaults, John earned more applause from the crowd.

My male friend commented that John's comedy was also crass, but he had the audience in the palm of his hand. He is one comedian who would do anything for a laugh.

Rufa Mae Quinto was another special guest in the show, but save for her "Booba" theme which she turned into a ballad, trying to ape **Regine Velasquez**, she was not really a crowd-pleaser that night.

The theater that is Fritz Ynfante

From page A28



"I DISCOVERED Martin Nievera."

But I wouldn't do a movie.

Why not?

I almost did one for Mother Lily and Bibsy Carballo was supposed to line-produce. This was when I was still doing "Penthouse Live" and Martin and Pops were the hottest TV personalities. Gary (Valenciano) and Zsa Zsa (Padilla) were also big.

Mother Lily called me up and said, *"Gusto ko gawa pelikula* with Martin, Gary, Pops and Zsa Zsa. *Gusto ko* title, 'With a Song in My Heart'. *Gusto ko may drama at* musical. *Gusto ko bulag si* Pops."

Joey Reyes, who used to do the Doña Buding script on "Penthouse," was supposed to be the scriptwriter.

Then one day I got a call that Mother Lily wanted to have lunch with me in her office in Valencia. When I arrived, I asked where Mother Lily was. She was in the preview room downstairs looking at the rushes of this movie with basketball stars, with girls in bikini.

While I was talking to her, she was doing her exercise. Then she told me, *"Ako may problema. Marami akong mga bata na* contract stars. *Gusto ko lagay mo din sila sa pelikula."* She wanted me to cast Manilyn Reynes and all those up-and-coming young stars at that time.

So the story was going to have a sub-plot and another sub-plot. So before we knew it, it was *chopseuy na*. That's it, I said, I'm not ready for Tagalog movies.

Another thing I cannot take is the style of acting or the way the lines are delivered. Why does it have to have the heaving of the chest or the throbbing of nostrils?

Don't you think you're being a snob by not wanting to direct a Tagalog movie?

Call me a snob, but I'm just being practically true to myself. I have to live with myself. That's the only thing. I'm not going to take my money to my grave. I'll take my style, integrity and originality and that's what I'm proud of.

What movies do you like?

I'd like to do light drama-comedies, the Nora Ephron movies like "Sleepless in Seattle."

But my all-time favorites are the old movies of Billy Wilder. I also fell in love with the movies of Steven Spielberg, but I was disappointed with "A.I. (Artificial Intelligence)." Maybe I didn't understand it. But I'm dying for Spielberg to do a musical. If anybody will do "Sunset Boulevard" in film, it's got to be Spielberg, with Streisand as Norma Desmond.

What was the last movie you saw?

"Black Hawk Down." Ridley Scott was really fantastic. He's my *kumpare*! After "Thelma and Louise," I fell in love with him. Both Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon were nominated best actress for that film. The script won for original screenplay.

Do you like his version of "Hannibal"?

I was disappointed. The book by Thomas Harris was far better. But "Gladiator" is a timeless movie. You can get the story and do it now. It's happening now.

What are you busy with after "Keep on Dancing" was canceled?

I cannot be idle. I can stay home because I'm financially secure. But it's not the money.

I have a new TV show, it's an inter-active dating game show, "Match TV," on Channel 9, Sundays, 8 to 9. The hosts are Derek Ramsey, Jeffrey Quizon and Amanda Griffin. We are launching it in March.

Is it your first time to direct a game show?

I used to direct "It's a Date," with Plinky Recto. But this one is more high-tech. You can call or you can text the searchee and tell him whether he's cute or *bobo*.

Who's your favorite theater director?

I like (the late) Rolando Tinio because he knew how to experiment. In the States, I like Trevor Nunn who did "Phantom of the Opera" and all those Andrew Lloyd Weber musicals. He also did "Sunset Boulevard."

Bob Fossey is my idol. George Abbot, Stanley Donen, Vincente Minnelli directed those MGM musicals in the '50s.

What do you consider your most personal show?

"Penthouse Live." It ran for seven years. It was like I was carrying a child. I discovered Martin. He may not be identified with dance, but he was a hit on "Penthouse."

Gina Tabuena one day came up to me and said, "You know the son of Bert Nievera is in town?"

Freddie Garcia who was then our producer, told me, "Maybe let's get a guy who is young."

Martin was a waiter who worked in their hamburger joint in Hawaii. I guested him in our Christmas show which we taped in Fort Santiago. He sang "Holiday," a song he composed for his girlfriend in the States. But when I saw him during the shoot, he was like John Ritter. At that time, "Three's Company" was a hit. Today, Jim Carrey is the John Ritter.

Martin was not good-looking and he was dark, but never mind. He had the talent. The rest is history.

The same is true with the Doña Buding character. It was supposed to be Cynthia Patag but she met an accident on her way down from Baguio. We wanted to have a monologue portion, something like Andy Rooney who would talk about the signs of the times, the problems of the day.

We needed a nouveau riche character, someone like Miss Piggy because I was so enamored with "The Muppets" then. Ronnie Henares told me, I know a back-up singer. She was Nanette Inventor who used to be with the UP Concert Chorus. She did a monologue and she was trembling during the audition. But I knew right there and then I had my Miss Piggy.

What else do you want to do?

I'd like to do a production of "Boys in the Band," but with all directors playing the roles. I'd like to see the likes of Joel Lamangan, Joey Reyes, Bernardo Bernardo in the cast.

Who will play the Cowboy?

All the Hunks, Diether, Piolo . . . one different Hunk every night. ***Louie C. Camino, Leah Salterio***

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The secret behind 'FPJ 2002' sticker revealed

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

REMEMBER the controversial sticker, "FPJ 2002," which created a stir last December?

The sticker puzzled and intrigued a lot of people who thought action king **Fernando Poe Jr.** was running for public office. Some people even thought he was starting an early campaign for his presidential bid, perhaps prompted by his close friend, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

But 2002 is not an election year. And FPJ has always maintained a low profile.

The sticker was explained recently. It simply meant that after a two-year absence from the big screen, FPJ returns and stars in a hard-action picture, "Batas ng Lansangan."

The movie is produced by Maverick Films and directed by FPJ himself, using his moniker, **Ronwaldo Reyes**.

FPJ plays an Army major who is quick with his gun but easily loses his temper and is impatient with the slow justice system. He is a widower with an estranged teenage daughter, **Kaye Abad**. His late wife's sister, played by **Dina Bonnevie,** is in love with him.

His nemesis is **Roi Vinzon**, an assassin out to get him for personal and financial reasons.

Also in "Batas ng Lansangan" are **Robert Arevalo, Ricardo Cepeda, Paquito Diaz, Dick Israel, Toby Alejar, Tony Bernal** and **Charlie Davao**. Child star **Lorena Garcia** is the orphan whom FPJ protects from a cruel guardian.

FPJ's legendary status is matched by his popularity among his colleagues and the public. He is loved, respected, admired, revered and at times even feared.

The long-reigning king of Philippine cinema is not only an acclaimed actor but also an award-winning producer, director and scriptwriter.

When the country celebrated its centennial as a republic in 1998, the Cultural Center of the Philippines named FPJ the "icon of the century," a distinction he shared with three other movie greats—Nora Aunor, Vic Silayan and Dolphy.

When FPJ's alma mater, San Beda College, marked its own centennial, it named the action king one of its outstanding alumni, together with **Ninoy Aquino, Raul Roco, Rene Saguisag** and **Krip Yuson**.

THE SECRET/ A28

POE JR. with Dina Bonnevie in "Batas ng Lansangan." Not a political bid, but only a movie.

NAVA. Busy year ahead.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	IKAW LANG HANGGANG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	ISANG PANAGINIP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	VANILLA SKY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS w/ BOYS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	IKAW LANG HANGGANG . . .
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT / SOURCE OF THE NIGHT
ODEON	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ODEON-2	KAULAYAW
ROBEN	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	JOY RIDE / KING OF GLADIATORS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
REMAR	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
REMAR-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON
B	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS
CINEMA-2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	REBULOSYONARYO
CINEMA-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
CINEMA-3	MARSHALL DICK
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	FROM HELL
CINEMA-6	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-7	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-8	KUNG IKAW AY ISANG PANAGINIP
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	RIDING CARS w/ BOYS
CINEMA-12	VANILLA SKY
CINEMA-14	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-15	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS
CINEMA-2	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-4	IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-5	VANILLA SKY
CINEMA-6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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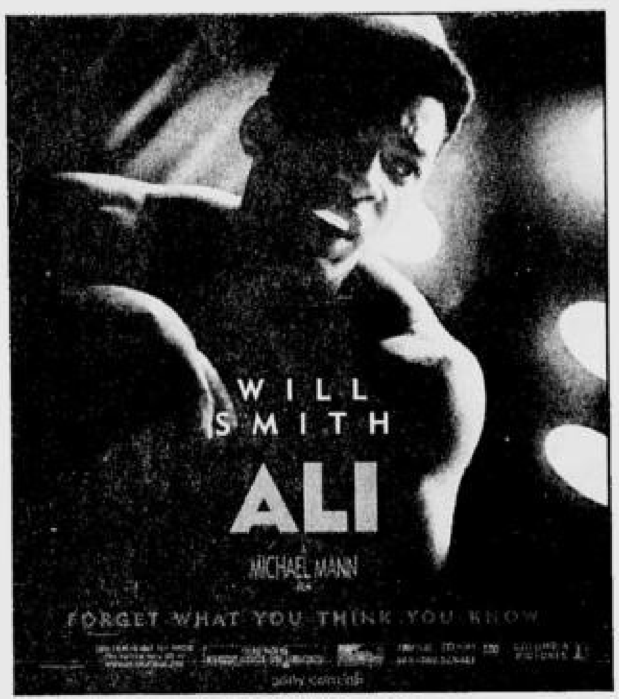
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MTRCB Rating: General Patronage

Starring: Maggie Cheung, Michelle Yeoh, Vivian Wu, Winston Chao, Jiang Wen

Directed by: Mabel Cheung

The Soong family was a political dynasty in China that reached the highest levels of power. This film follows the lives of the three Soong sisters, who were educated in America and return to China. Ching-ling marries Sun Yat-sen, the revolutionary founder of modern China, Ai-ling marries a powerful businessman, and May-ling marries Chiang Kai-shek, China's leader during World War II. All three women exert a strong influence on their nation, in this compelling historical drama that had censorship problems while filming in mainland China.

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Nowhere to Hide

AN EXCLUSIVE PHILIPPINE PREMIERE

"A lunatic derby of cuts & bravura movie making fired from the barrel of a gun... 'Hide' is all verve & vibes, a rollicking blend of exhibitionistic vitality."
- The New York Times

NOWHERE TO HIDE is a different kind of detective action film that overrides genre expectations. Action scenes are played out in unexpected places, and we see the essential element of cinema - movement itself - at work. The dynamic visual styles matched by an eclectical soundtrack that synthesizes past and current sensibilities. Written and directed by Lee Myung-Se, the story focuses on Woo, an eccentric detective whose search for a murderer takes him and his team of detectives into the heart of the city and out to the countryside on the trail of a most elusive man.

NOWHERE TO HIDE boasts a red-hot cast of Korea's top actors: international actor Park Joong-Hoon, veteran actor Ahn Sung-Ki, along with young talents Jang Dung-Kun and Choi Ji-Woo.
Only the recently relaxed censorship in Korea allowed for Lee to make a film with such violently portrayed policemen. Nonetheless, he says the police closely monitored the film while it was being made.

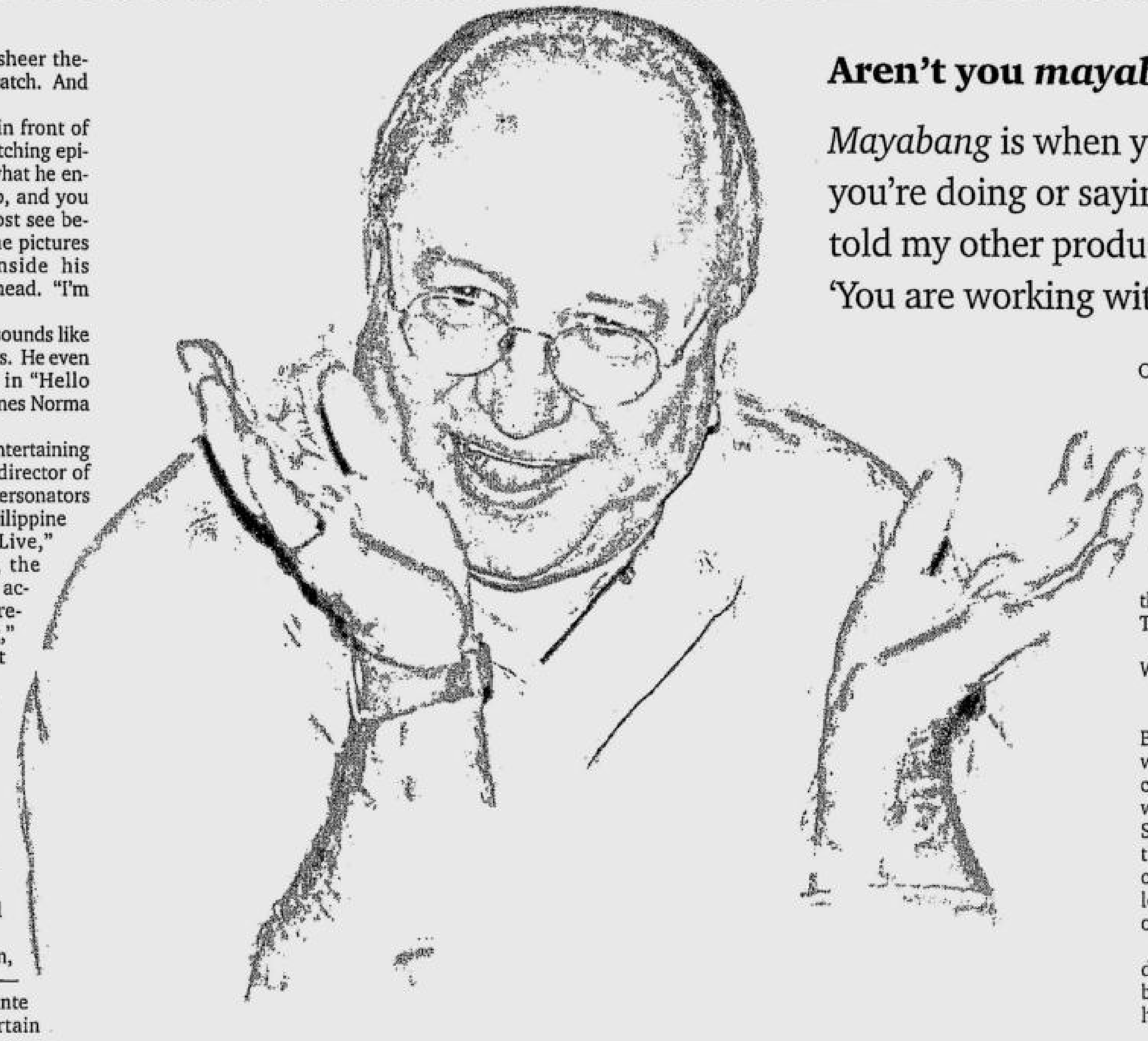
NOWHERE TO HIDE was featured at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival, and at the Museum of Modern ArtFilm Society of Lincoln Centers 2000 New Directors/New Films festival in New York City

Language: Korean with English Sub-titles

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

The theater that is Fritz Ynfante



"CALL me a snob, but I'm just being practically true to myself."

ROMY HOMILLADA

Aren't you *mayabang* now?

Mayabang is when you don't know what you're doing or saying. As a matter of fact, I told my other producer, Niña Romualdez, 'You are working with a genius'

Q & A

INTERVIEWING Fritz Ynfante is sheer theater. You listen closely, and you watch. And you are entertained.

As he speaks, his hands dance in front of him, drawing scenes in the air, snatching episodes from the past and painting what he envisions of the future. He looks up, and you could almost see before you the pictures moving inside his very busy head. "I'm a very visual person," he says.

He laughs, a tinkling laugh that sounds like a piano accompaniment to his words. He even sings. One moment he is Dolly in "Hello Dolly!" The next instance he becomes Norma Desmond in "Sunset Boulevard."

But the most interesting, most entertaining character is the man himself, the director of the upcoming show of female impersonators called "Illusione," as well as of Philippine TV landmarks like "Penthouse Live," which created Martin Nievera, the country's "best singer, bar none," according to Lea Salonga, and the recently departed "Keep on Dancing," which was typical Ynfante in that it was constantly full of surprises.

Fritz is always a surprise. In the middle of the interview, a waitress comes and asks for his car key so the valet can move his car. "No, I'd rather move it myself," Fritz says imperiously and he stands, like Julius Caesar about to cross the Rubicon. "It's a very expensive car."

Indeed, it is a four-month-old bottle green BMW.

When he sweeps out of the room, imagine the curtains going down—and going up again, for Fritz Ynfante will have to acknowledge the curtain call and the standing ovation.

How did you choose the performers for "Illusione"?

We extended the auditions. It was supposed to be only for two weekends, but we had a third week. About 50 or 60 showed up, but we were not really happy with them. The good ones came from Politixx because it was still the most classy joint, and we had others from the holes in the wall in Malate and Pasong Tamo.

The performers were narrowed down to about 24, but we ended up with 18. Then I added the entire Powerdance with eight boys whom I really need for some numbers that will require male dancers.

Of those who were chosen in the auditions, three were straight guys. When I told them, "This is basically dress-like-a-woman." They said, "We're here because we're actors." Isn't that lovely?

We have two thespians. Jake Macapagal was a member of the "Miss Saigon" cast in Hamburg. The other is Cocoy Palma, a really, really good-looking boy. The guy is straight and he thinks he's straight. But I don't know after March 16 when we drop our curtains and close the performance.

You'll make the straight guys wear those diva costumes?

Oh, definitely! When Bahaghari Productions and I decided to do this and we announced the auditions, I'd be honest, I really wanted straight guys to apply. They are more malleable because in their culture, they haven't been doing this.

This is not just a melange of divas doing their thing. We are doing a highly conceptualized show. It's like watching a Broadway play. It's got a storyline. It's got a plot. It's got a script, which Roy Iglesias wrote.

The show is divided into three suites which will run the whole gamut of emotions and dance forms. So you'll see Broadway, jazz dancing, the divas portion which is hip-hop and modern dance with Tina Turner, Mariah Carey, Gloria Gaynor.

For the finale, we're doing a classical ballet, "Swan Lake," done for the first time by men dressed in tutus.

Three years ago, a British company with a great choreographer who is a protégeé of Mikhail Baryshnikov presented an all-male "Swan Lake" on Broadway. It was fabulous. That inspired me.

I told myself, "Someday, I'm going to do this." And believe me, dreams do come true." Thanks to Bahaghari.

We'll also have the fag hag herself. Oprah Winfrey, who will be flying in from Chicago.

Really?

Got you there. That's the illusion. As Barbra Streisand said, one time she was walking in New York and an elderly couple came from the other side of the street and the wife shouted, "John, look, it's Barbra Streisand!" The husband said, "No, honey, that's not Barbra Streisand. That's just another female impersonator who wants to look like Barbra Streisand." And it was the original woman!

That proves what illusion can do. It's that defection. For a moment . . . is it real? Will you believe in make-believe for an hour-and-a-half?

You'll be watching excerpts from "Hello, Dolly," "Pippin," "Gypsy," "Sweet Charity," "Mama Mia," "Sunset Boulevard" and "Dream Girls."

That's why when we auditioned, we wanted the culture changed. (Choreographer) Douglas (Nierras) and I had to be emphatic with the people in the cast. You're only

THE THEATER/ A28

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

Kris Aquino is on leave. Her column will appear on Friday.

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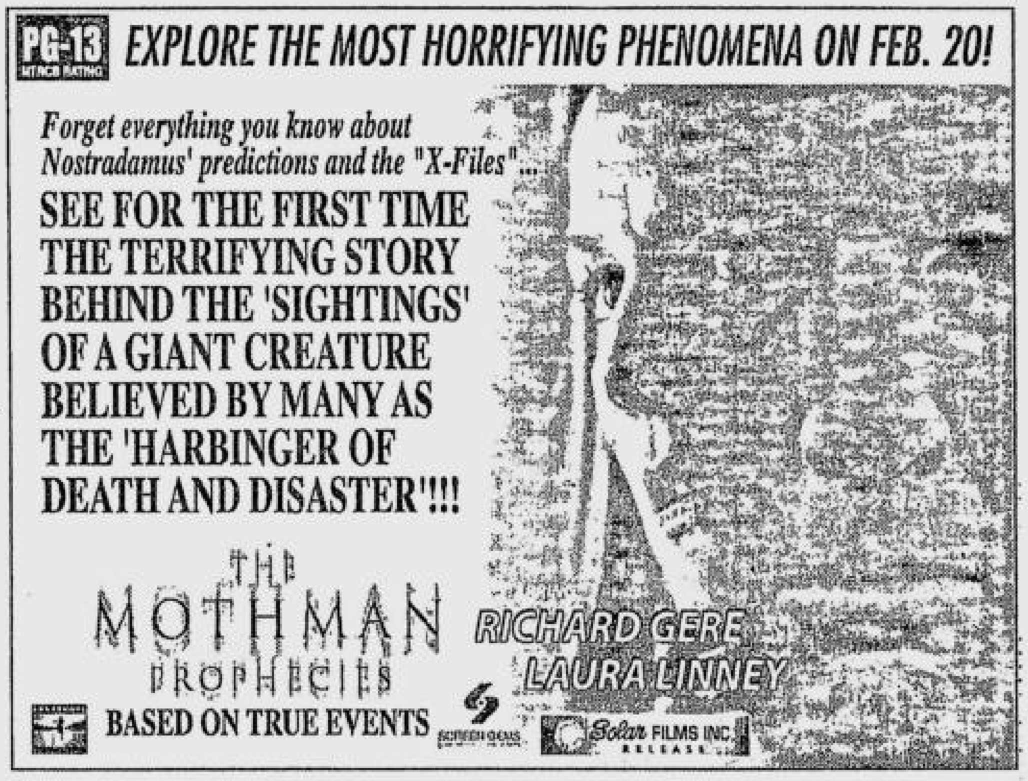

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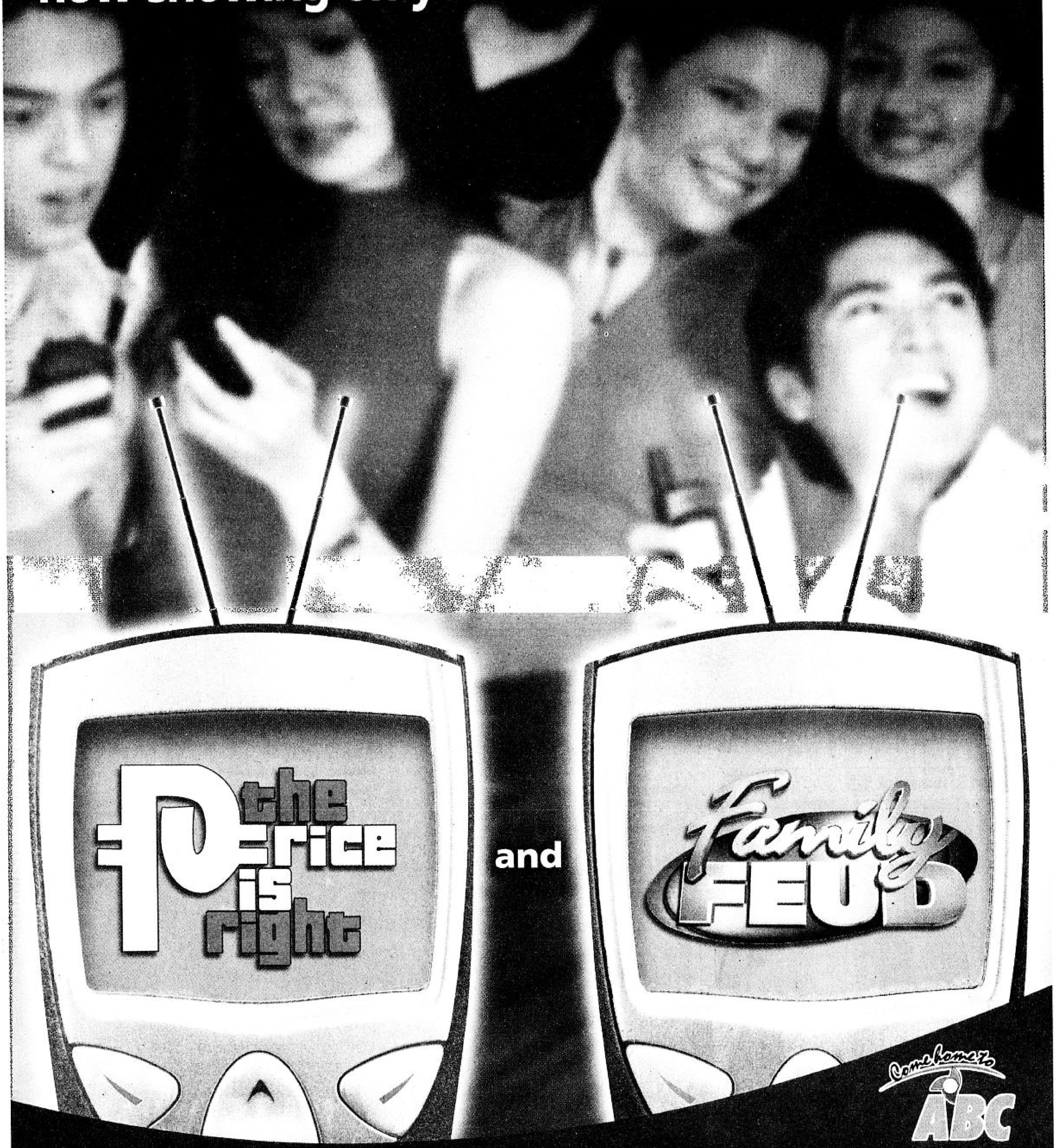

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BSP urges borrowers to file complaint on high loan rates

Follow-through buying seen lifting local stocks
Page B6

By Clarissa S. Batino

BANGKO Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura has supported the position of Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II that the five-percentage-point cap on bank lending spread above the 91-day treasury bill yield should apply to prime and non-prime borrowers.

Buenaventura also urged borrowers being charged heavily by banks or those having difficulty in accessing credit to formalize their complaint before the Monetary Board of the BSP.

"The gentleman's agreement applies to all loans and not just on the prime lending rate," Buenaventura said. Banks, he added, were telling him that they were already lending to prime clients at a spread of only 1.5-percentage-point over the 91-day treasury bill rate.

An official of the Bankers Association of the Philippines last week claimed that Roxas had misinterpreted the agreement of the members of the BAP with the central bank and that the cap applied only to prime borrowers.

"To the real prime clients, there should not even be a spread," Buenaventura pointed out. Prime borrowers include multinational firms and blue chip companies with a good credit standing and those posing very little risk that the loan would turn sour.

The central bank chief said the BSP has started telling banks not only to comply with the gentleman's agreement but also to report their actual lending rates during a daily informal survey of the regulator.

Sources said that banks actually charge as much as five percentage points more than the lending rates they disclose to the BSP.

"If they do not report their actual lending rates, we would fine them as soon as we open their books and find out. But our most powerful tool remains the moral suasion because if they continue to be stubborn, we would give them a hard time, for instance, in accessing the rediscount window," Buenaventura said.

During the annual audit of banks, the BSP would check whether the lending rates they submitted on a daily basis were the actual rates they charged their borrowers.

As of last Friday, several banks were still charging borrowers a rate beyond the cap considering that the 91-day benchmark rate had dipped to 9.278 percent last Monday. The rates should not be more than 12.278 percent.

Among those still charging even their prime clients more than the cap as of last Friday were Philippine National Bank, Asia United Bank, United Overseas Bank, Maybank with 12.75 percent; Union Bank, International Commercial Bank of China with 12.5 percent, and East West Bank with 13.375 percent.

"The public must complain if they are being disadvantaged. But those borrowers defaulting on their loans are not included," Buenaventura said.

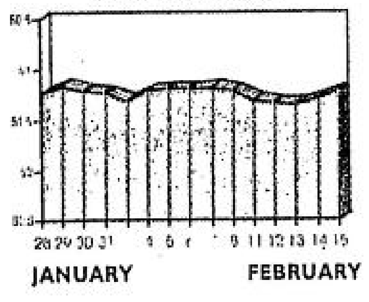
While aware that nobody could force banks to

BSP/ B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

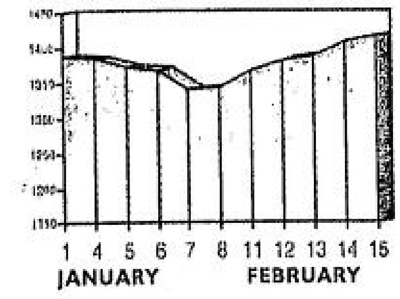
₱51.22 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 15, 2002

¥132.74 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 15, 2002

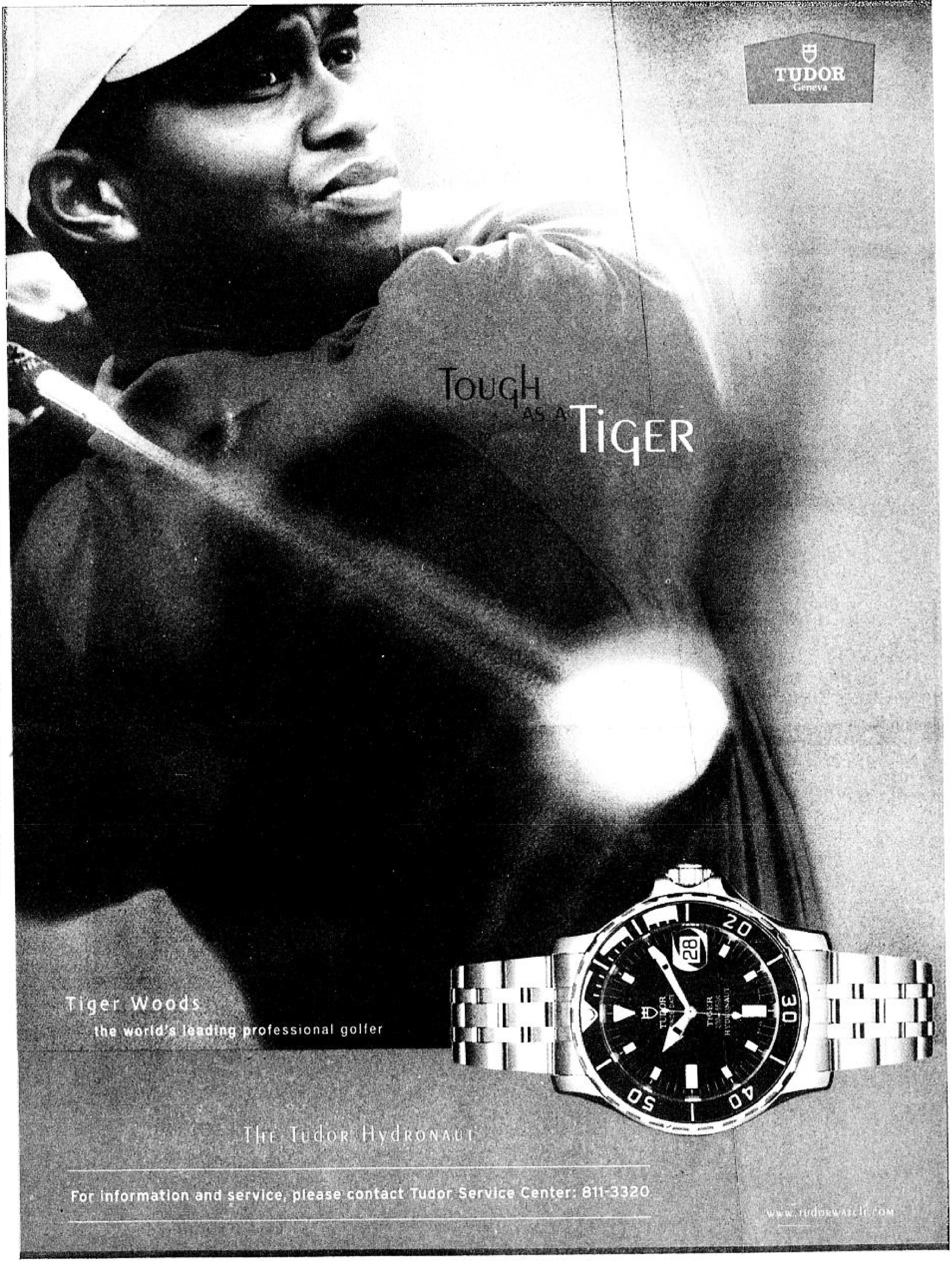
GOLD: $299.75./300.50
per ounce Hong Kong,
Feb. 15, 2002

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)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Landbank eyes ₱2-B infusion

By Clarissa Batino

STATE-OWNED Land Bank of the Philippines is considering tapping the private sector for tier-two funds worth as much as P2 billion to raise its capital-to-asset ratio to 13 percent.

The country's fifth largest bank had a capital-to-asset ratio of 10.9 percent as of end-2001 and the number would drop further once it had remitted part of the P1.5 billion in net earnings last year to the government.

Landbank president Margarito Teves said the bank would like to improve its capital-to-asset ratio, one measure of financial health, to 13 percent. This means that it has to build up its capital by P2 billion either from retained earnings or from a fresh infusion.

Alfonso Cruz, executive vice president of Landbank, said the bank had considered tapping capital from tier-two funds since no infusion from the government was forthcoming.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has been encouraging locally operating lenders to increase their capital either through the usual equity infusion or through the so-called tier-two money.

Landbank's capital-to-asset ratio remains well within the BSP requirement of 10 percent. Teves, however, said that it would be a prudent banking practice to have a higher ratio because it indicates the financial capacity of a bank to cover risks in relation to its operations.

A tier-two capital is also referred to as subordinated debt. It is an investment that behaves like a deposit because it earns a pre-determined rate, unlike a shareholder whose rate of return depends on a company's financial performance.

"We are studying whether our charter allows us to raise capital from the private sector through tier-two. We are looking at it but we would like to wait until most banks are doing it so we won't have to deal with perception problems," Cruz said.

Normally, banks with precarious finances were those in most need of infusion. So far, only three banks have asked the BSP's permission to raise money through tier-two capital.

Metrobank, the country's largest, had issued $100 million worth of 10-year bonds to Singapore venture firm Dunmore Asset Ltd. The funds were used to buy long-term Philippine dollar bonds.

Fourth-largest Equitable-PCI Bank has sought the central bank's approval to issue P5 billion and $100 million worth of tier-two capital while eight-largest Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. has also submitted its application to the BSP.

Landbank said it was targeting to increase its net income by 10 percent to P1.65 billion this year and would like to bring down the amount of its bad loans by P5 billion to reduce its non-performing loans ratio to the industry average of about 17 percent from 22 percent of total loans last year.

Teves said the bank would aspire to improve its earnings despite a commitment to advance P4.3 billion to the government's comprehensive agrarian reform program.

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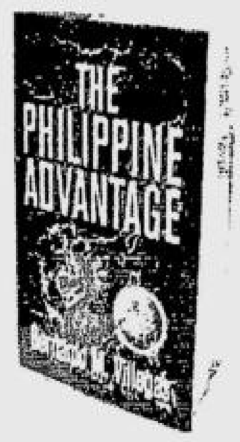

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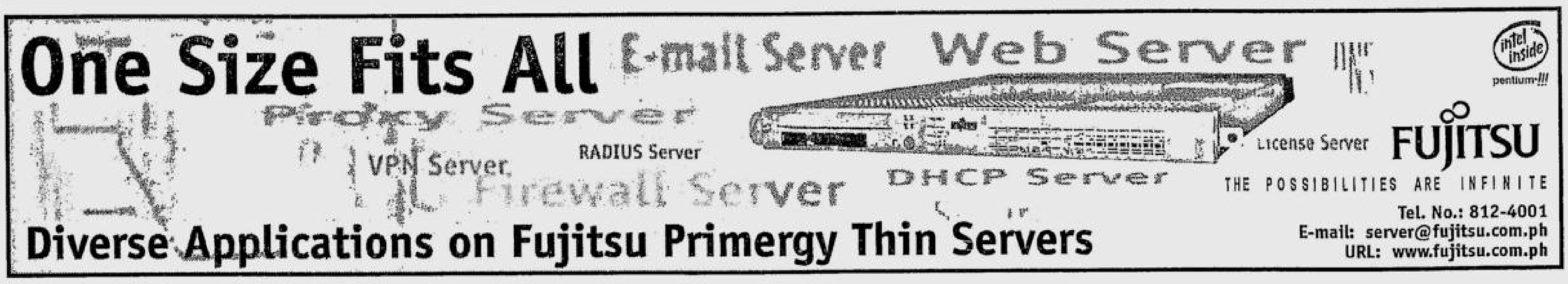

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Don Emilio's denial

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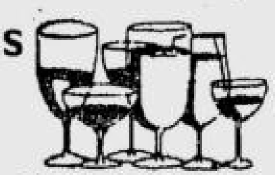

Victor C. Agustin

DON Emilio Yap's newspaper came out with a front-page story Friday claiming that the Supreme Court order lifting the sequestration order on Hans Menzi's holding company does not cover any of the newspaper's shares.

Strange, since by Yap's own report to the Securities and Exchange Commission right after the 1986 Edsa Revolt, the very same incorporators of the Hans Menzi holding company had individual shareholdings in Yap's newspaper whose sum equals, voila!, the Hans Menzi claim that the Supreme Court referred to.

Yap reported to the SEC that Menzi incorporators Eduardo Cojuangco (yes, the San Miguel chair), Cesar Zalamea and Jose Campos had a total of 214,424.5 shares in the newspaper as of Feb. 21, 1986. This is the same sequestered bloc, equivalent to 37 percent of the Yap paper, that Menzi estate executor Manuel Montecillo is claiming before the Sandiganbayan.

In fact, the Yap paper, using Yap's bank, Philtrust, tried to buy the same bloc for about P47.6 million in May 1987 but was initially rebuffed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government since the shares were sequestered and the Sandiganbayan still had to determine their real owners.

But in a bizarre reversal, the PCGG two months later sold to the Yap paper the same Campos and Zalamea shares, and, in May 1988, also relinquished the Cojuangco shares in favor of the Yap paper.

In his initial rebuff to Yap, then PCCG Chair Ramon Diaz said the commission "cannot dispose of these sequestered shares except when absolutely necessary in order to preserve the value thereof, as when the same are clearly diminishing in value."

Diaz has since gone to the other world, but the two other commissioners who also signed the sale/transfer of the disputed shares, Orlando Romero and Quintin Doromal, are still very much around.

And instead of "diminishing" value as had been feared, the 37-percent bloc has now accumulated about P1.2 billion in cash dividends and another P2 billion by way of stock dividends.

Who is keeping this fortune has remained unanswered to this day.

What is clear though is, were the 1987 transaction be repeated today, somebody would definitely spend a lifetime in jail for plunder.

Laya's story

FORMER Central Bank Governor Jaime Laya wrote to say that he is a mere director, and no longer the president, of Philtrust, the Yap bank that has taken custody of the P275 million of the Menzi funds.

As a director who just goes to the bank once a month to attend the board meetings, "I also know nothing about (Yap newspaper's) deposits or dividends at Philtrust and have not talked to anyone about these," Laya said.

Now, as to the allegation about the $600 million in "missing" or "overstated" foreign exchange reserves during his watch at the central bank, Laya said the confusion arose from the "large drop in both assets and liabilities of the central bank over a two-week period between Sept. 30 and Oct. 15, 1983, if I am not mistaken," at the height of a massive bank run in the aftermath of the Aquino assassination.

"The facts were clearly stated in the central bank statements released to the international bankers on two occasions, immediately after the respective statement dates," he said. "Details were not concealed but there was disagreement between the central bank and the bankers over (the) $600-million drop."

Heard through the grapevine

THE UP College of Law is now in a scandal buzz after two bachelor professors not only got themselves romantically entangled with their students, but even got their students on the family way.

The redeeming feature of this saga is that one of the professors, incidentally now holding a sensitive position in the government, has promised to marry the expecting student.

The other student, meanwhile, is still on, how shall we say it, a pregnant pause.

Come to think of it, if open lesbianism is now the "in" thing within the law school, what is then wrong with teachers hitting on their students?

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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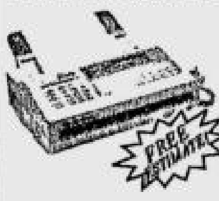

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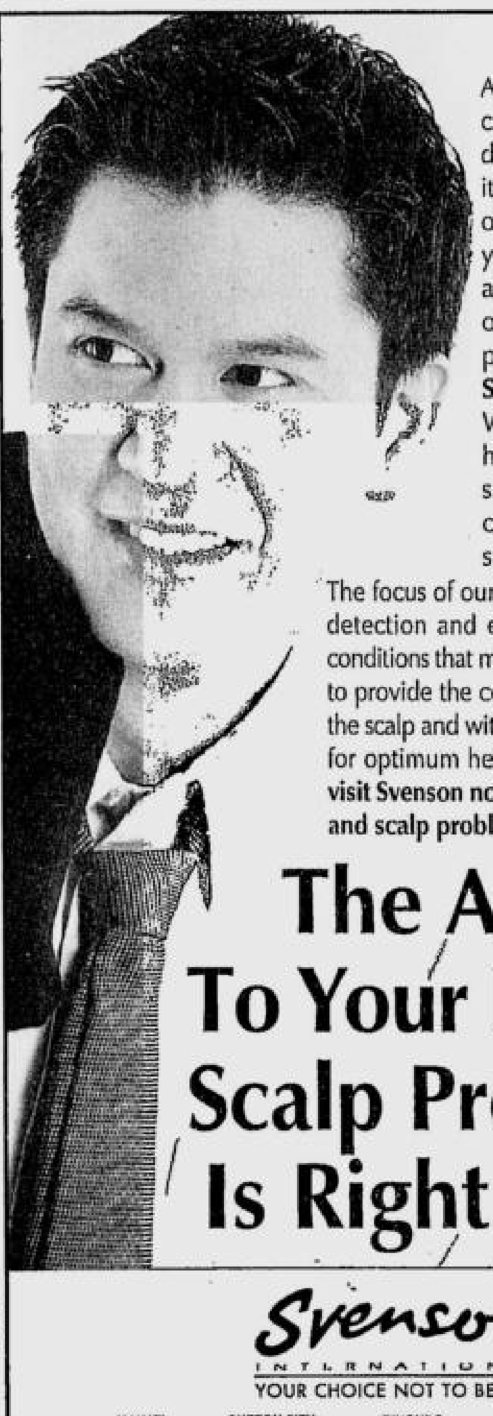

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Think tank says petrochem industry needs tariff shields

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A PRIVATE think tank has urged the Macapagal administration to maintain tariff shields on polymer resins beyond 2003 to give the Philippine petrochemical industry more time to sharpen its competitiveness.

A study by the Center for Research and Communications said the Philippine petrochemical industry deserved tariff protection under the "infant industry principle" because it was still considered a newborn (the first polymer plants started operations in the 1990s) compared to its counterparts in the region.

Also, CRC said the industry was strategically important to almost all sectors of the economy.

CRC said that as an infant industry, petrochemical companies need more time to develop the necessary expertise and economies of scale as well as tapping foreign funding sources in view of the poor domestic capital markets.

Compared to the current 15-percent tariff on polymers in the Philippines, CRC said Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, India, Thailand Malaysia and Indonesia granted 25 percent to 40 percent tariff protection during the infancy stage of their respective petrochemical industries.

Based on these countries' experience, CRC said protecting the petrochemical industry in its early years proved to be beneficial to the downstream plastic converters. The converters flourished to the extent that they even exported their excess output when the polymer makers advanced to a higher stage of development.

CRC said the growth of these countries' petrochemical industries was spurred by the full integration of their operations with the construction of naphtha crackers on their shores. It said the country needed a naphtha cracker to eliminate shipping costs (that could eat up to 10 percent of producing resins), reduce foreign exchange costs and assure steady supply.

The Petrochemical Manufacturers Association of the Philippines has appealed to the Department of Trade and Industry to lobby in the Asean for a freeze on polymer duties that are set to go down from 15 percent to 5 percent next year.

Despite a favorable backing from the Department of Energy, the DTI has so far refused to endorse their petition until the industry has firmed up its plans to put up a naphtha cracker.

The PMAP insisted that the tariff freeze was meant to ensure the survival of the industry. The group claimed that a naphtha cracker would be useless if, after its construction, there would be no viable petrochemical company to buy its output of monomers.

Should you pay more to SSS?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE SOCIAL Security System wants to raise its members' monthly contributions from 8.4 percent to 14 percent of payroll. Presumably, the new rate will continue to be shared on a 60-40 basis between the employer and the employee.

For example, a member with a monthly salary of between P5,250 and P5,749.49 is classified as having a monthly salary credit of P5,500. Under the present set-up, his employer pays P278.70 and he pays P183.70 or a total of P462.40 a month. Under the proposed scheme, his employer will pay an additional P183.30 and he will pay an extra P124.30 or a grand total of P770 monthly.

Is the SSS right in wanting to raise contributions? Maybe so. But from what I have read and heard at media, the SSS needs to do a better job of selling the idea.

One reason for the increase is that the current rate of 8.4 percent is rather low compared to the rates at the Government Service Insurance System. It is also claimed that the SSS rate is also lower that the rate in, say, Singapore. But that is only one half of the equation. The other half is: What are the benefits at the GSIS and in Singapore? The comparison then is incomplete. But even if the comparison is made whole, I have a feeling we will be comparing *santol* with *mangga*.

Another reason is that the SSS will dry up by 2015 unless the rates are raised. A future as grim as this should not be kept in the dark recesses of the actuarial department. Let us see the detailed projections in the harsh sunlight. I would like to see what mathematical assumptions were used to arrive at the conclusion. What was the membership growth? What was the level of overhead? What was the return on investment?

Most important, have the huge losses on the crony deals under the Estrada presidency been factored in? If so, the members are being made to suffer and the villains are going scot-free.

SSS operations can be boiled down to a simple equation: contributions plus investment income equal benefit payments plus overhead. Raising contributions takes care of only one of four of the factors of the equation. What is the projected investment income? Is overhead being cut down? It worries me that nothing has been said about raising the benefits, only raising the contributions, especially when we consider that contributions are broken down to pay not only pensions but also death and disability benefits.

As a retiree and pensioner, I am also bothered that the SSS keeps on saying that one reason why benefits are outstripping contributions is that the total number of pensioners is rising by 18 percent while contributions are rising by only 3 percent. This is fuzzy mathematics.

The 100,000 members who retired last year did not spring out of nowhere. Each and every one contributed through their long years of employment. If more members are living longer, their meager pension may well cut their life span.

Which brings me to Section 18 of the Social Security Act of 1997 (Republic Act 8282), which reads: ". . . the minimum and maximum salary credit as well as the rate of contributions may be fixed from time to time by the Commission through rules and regulations taking into account actuarial calculations and **rate of benefits** (Emphasis mine), subject to the approval of the President of the Philippines."

I read this to mean that the contributions cannot be increased without correspondingly increasing benefits. So, the question boils down to this: are benefits going to be raised along with contributions?

GSIS Update. My good friend, Amalio Mallari, VP at GSIS, called up as soon as he read my column last week. Under Memorandum Circular No. 2-2001 dated June 20, 2001, an Ombudsman clearance is no longer required of a soon-to-retire government employee to qualify for pension.

BSP resumes FCDU license issuance to thrift banks

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER a two-year moratorium, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will again accept applications from thrift banks for license to operate foreign currency deposit units.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the Monetary Board had approved the resumption of the issuance of FCDU licenses to thrift banks provided they meet a more stringent capital requirement of the central bank.

The change in policy, said Reyes, will be relayed soon to the banks through a circular.

To obtain an FCDU license, a thrift bank based in Metro Manila should have a capital of at least P650 million and those in the provinces should have at least P110 million in capital. The capital is double the minimum requirement of the BSP on thrift banks of P325 million (Metro Manila and P52.5 million provinces).

A thrift bank must also have a capital-to-asset ratio of 12 percent before a bank can qualify for an FCDU license. Savings banks with existing FCDU licenses must double their capital within a two-year period, said the central bank official.

Reyes said the BSP had stopped issuing FCDU licenses to thrift banks in July 1999.

Of the 108 thrift banks operating in the country, only a few were able to obtain FCDU licenses before the moratorium was imposed, said Reyes.

The decision to resume the issuance of FCDU licenses to thrift banks, said Reyes, was aimed at facilitating the remittances of overseas Filipino workers to their families particularly those in the provinces.

The central bank believes that many thrift banks will be interested to apply for a license because it will allow them to take in foreign currency deposits and extend dollar loans.

Reyes, however, pointed out that unlike the FCDU licenses granted to commercial banks, the license to be given to thrift banks would have a limited coverage. While thrift banks can extend dollar loans, the amount will be limited, he said.

Reyes said the granting of new FCDU licenses to thrift banks would not necessarily increase the level of FCDU loans.

The dollar deposit units consist mainly of deposits of overseas Filipino workers.

Banks started operating separate dollar deposit units in 1983 when the fund was only about $600 million. The combined share of four local universal banks and a foreign bank branch accounted for 39 percent of the total FCDU loans.

The level in FCDU deposits has grown to current levels despite the 1983 crisis, the 1986 revolution, the subsequent coups and the 1997 Asian crisis, a central bank official noted.

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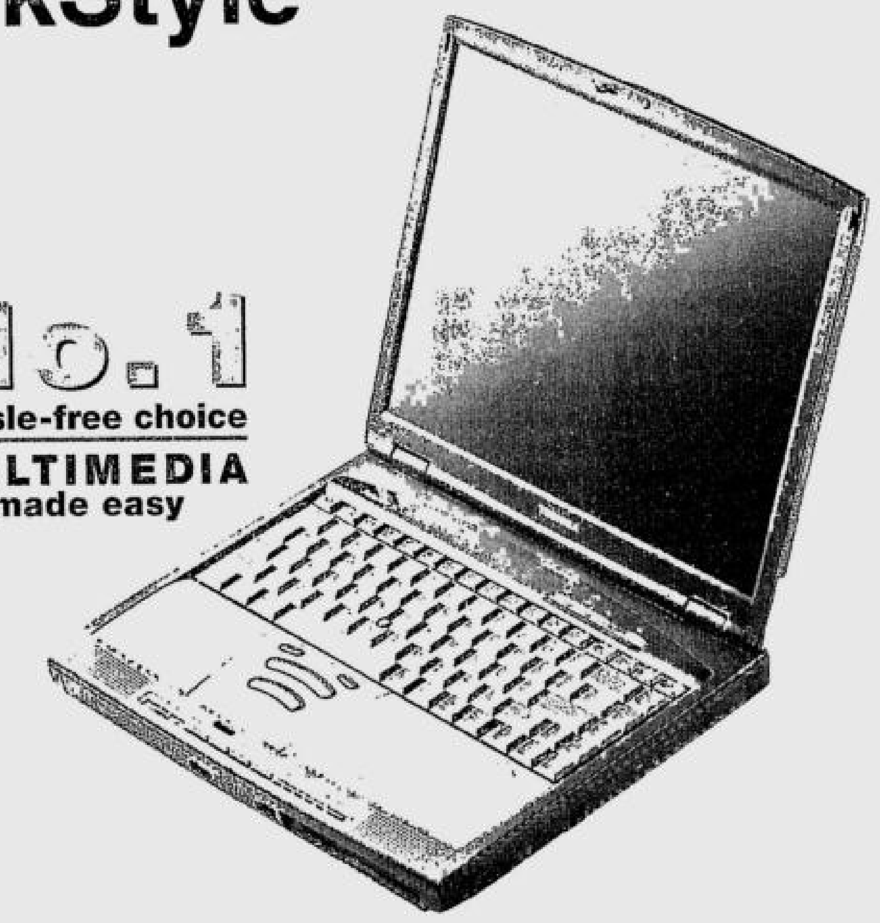

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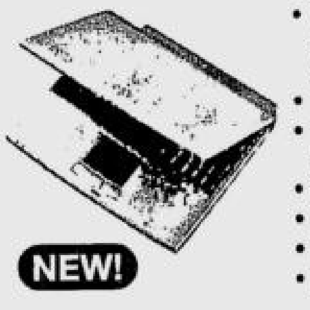

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Gov't includes UCPB board takeover in SMC talks

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MACAPAGAL administration wants its nominees installed in the board of United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) before it will sign a two-year, power-sharing agreement with San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered his committee, which is reviewing the $540-million buy-in of Kirin Brewery in SMC, to broaden the areas for review to include government representation in the UCPB board.

Buoyed by a Supreme Court ruling which declared the sequestered UCPB shares (representing 94.29-percent equity in the bank) as "indisputably acquired with coco levy funds which are public in character, "the President announced last month her eight nominees to the UCPB board—bankers Edward Go (chair), Francisco del Rosario (president), and Ramon Arceo; farmers' representatives Joey Faustino, Vicente Fabe, Elen Osias and Efren Villaseñor; and PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza.

The President apparently wanted to avoid further delays in the government's bid to retake control of UCPB from Cojuangco whose allies have so far refused to yield their seats.

UCPB's board is currently made up of Jeronimo U. Kilayko (chair), Juan J. Carlos, Lorenzo V. Tan, Virgilio Jacinto, Redentor T. Alegre, Albert Chua Gohu, Andres Y. Narvasa Jr., Romeo Odi, Manuel R.Pamaran, Rosario R. Razon, Danilo R. Reyes, Mila A. Reforma, Agustin P. Salgado Jr. and Rebecca A. Ynares.

Roxas said that UCPB was the final key to the signing of an agreement with Cojuangco as he stressed that an accord would be unlikely should the government fail to get board representation in UCPB. Roxas said negotiations between his committee and Cojuangco were likely to be concluded on Feb. 22.

Cojuangco had already acceded to the government's demands for adequate representation in SMC's board, key executive committees and all its subsidiaries in exchange for getting the government's support in approving the Kirin deal in a special stockholders' meeting on Feb. 27.

Cojuangco had plotted Kirin's entry as a means to firm up his tenuous hold on SMC but the PCGG vigorously opposed this ploy because it would unduly dilute the sequestered shares in SMC since the Japanese brewer would buy new shares of the company. SMC officials have already explained details of the deal to the PCGG.

The government wanted to exercise tighter control on the management of UCPB and SMC because these formed the core of the multibillion-peso assets of the coconut levy funds collected between 1973 and 1982.

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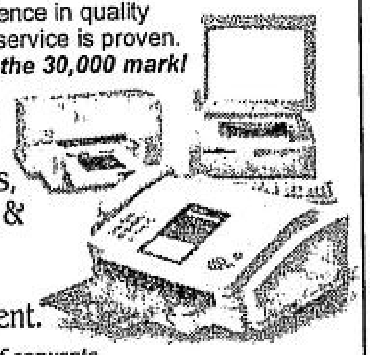

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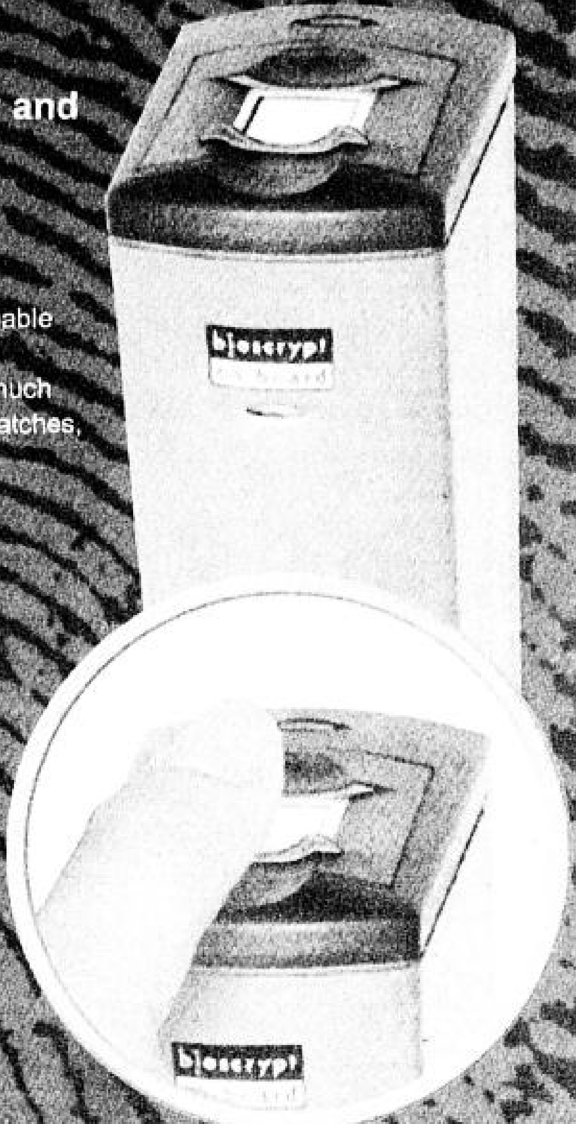

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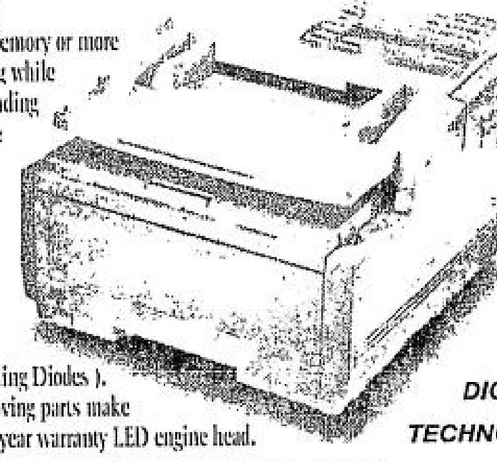

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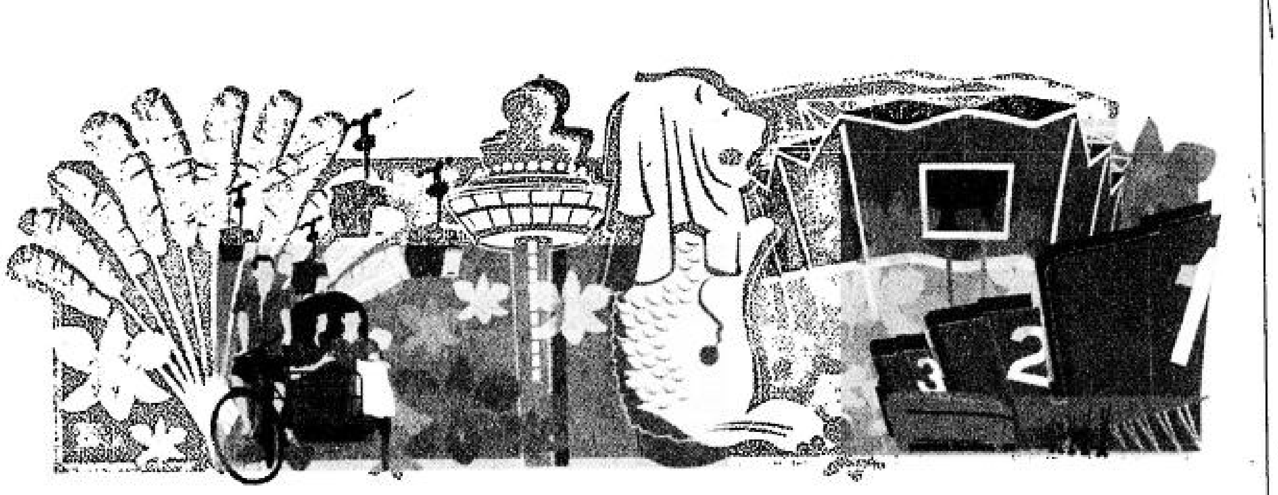

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Follow-through buying seen

By Doris C. Dumlao

SOME follow-through buying is still expected to benefit local stocks this week following a breakout of the main-share index from the 1,400 resistance level, but analysts said a big downward correction was bound anytime soon.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained another 5.39 percent last week to close at 1,416.83 on Friday, buoyed by bargain-hunting among local investors.

Analysts said that local investors would attempt to push the index to 1,480 and even test 1,500 but might not be able to breach this resistance immediately.

A local trader said foreign buying has remained at the same levels during the past few weeks but local buying was increasing, which meant that the local investors would have the funds to push the Phisix higher.

ING Barings managing director Cesar Luis Bate said there were still opportunities to buy selective blue chips.

Securities Specialist president Francisco Villaroman, for his part, said he did not believe that the market would post strong gains this week.

"Consolidation is due but the (technical) signals are all up. So, it's ambiguous when the market will correct," Villaroman said.

BPI Securities technical analyst Roberto Cano said the low-interest rate regime and the improving economic scenario continued to benefit the market.

"We expect follow-through buying and bargain-hunting to push the market higher this week. The market rally has largely been broad-based with accumulation seen mostly on selected blue chips and second-liners," Cano said.

"Also, the market's ability to sustain the 1,400 range indicates strength. We suggest to take corrections as an opportunity to enter the market," he said.

However, investment guide Philstocks.net said that despite the positive momentum in the market, the current rally was not likely to be sustainable.

"The market's recent run-up has been accompanied by thin volume. The market now looks a little tired after rallying for more than three months now. With short-term momentum indicators being overbought and already showing a negative divergence to the index, this could lead to an intermediate corrective or testing phase," Philstocks.net said.

While a resurgence in confidence has tamed the bears for three months now, it said the market has moved a bit ahead of itself and created some short-term risks in the months ahead.

"The local market's valuations are now above Asian counterparts and it remains uncertain whether fundamentals can catch up with stock prices" it said.

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Eagleridge	15,000	Sta. Elena	60,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	20,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	45,000
Manila Southwoods	20,000	Tagaytay Mid.	35,000
Makati Sports "A"	25,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	300,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

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Club Filipino	200,000	Eagle Ridge "A/B/C"	350/400/550
Eagle Ridge A/B/C	350/400/550	Forest Hil "A"/B/C	230/230/270
Forest Hil "A"/B/C	230/250/320	Manila Golf (Indv.)/Corp.	10.5M/12.3M
Manila Golf (Indv.)/Corp	Please call	Manila Polo	2,650,000
Manila Polo	2,650,000	Manila Soutwoods "A"/B	630,000/750
Manila Southwods "A"/B	650/750	Makati Sports "A"/B	250/250
Makati Sports "A"/B	250/250	Mt. Malarayat "A"/C	350,000/550,000
Mimosa Indiv/C-3	170/250	Orchard A/B/C	220/300/350
Orchard "A"/B/C	220/300/350	Rivera "A/B"	190/250
Punta Fuego	580,000	Royal Tagaytay/Rockwell	Please call
Riviera "A"/B	190/260	Sta. Elena A/B	1,700,000/1,750
Royale Tagaytay	80,000	Sherwood A/B	100,000
Tagaytay Midlands	750,000	Tagaytay Midlands	750,000
Valle Verde CC/Corp.	150/320	Tagaytay H'land Club/Golf	360/820
Wack Wack	7.1M	Valley Golf	200,000
		Wack Wack	6.8M

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4. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	-	360,000.00
5. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB	200,000.00	-
6. FONTANA "C"	150,000.00	-
7. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000.00	-
8. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000.00	250,000.00
9. MANILA POLO CLUB	Please call	2,500,000.00
10. MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Corporate)	-	12,200,000.00
11. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	650,000.00	600,000.00
12. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	720,000.00	-
13. MIMOSA	-	100,000.00
14. MT. MALARAYAT "B"	400,000.00	-
15. MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB	30,000.00	-
16. ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	-	350,000.00
17. PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	120,000.00	-
18. PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN ASSOCIATION	60,000.00	-
19. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	-	200,000.00
20. ROYALE TAGAYTAY	80,000.00	-
21. ROCKWELL	550,000.00	-
22. RIVIERA GOLF CLUB "B"	250,000.00	-
23. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB	-	1,700,000.00
24. SHERWOOD HILLS "C"		200,000.00
25. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L GOLF CLUB		800,000.00
26. TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB	-	700,000.00
27. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	170,000.00	-
28. VALLEY GOLF CLUB	-	210,000.00
29. VERDEMAR GOLF CLUB, INC (CEBU)	Please call	-
30. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	7,500,000.00	6,500,000.00
31. THE COUNTRY CLUB	4,000,000.00	-
32. OTHERS	Please call	-

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COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	30,000.00	VALLEY GOLF CLUB	15,000.00
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB	25,000.00	WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	80,000.00
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, February 15, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	3,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67	68	67	67.5	871,800
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	10,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	29	29	29	29	225,900
First E-Bank Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	6,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	210	212	208	211	159,350
Philippine National Bank	76	76	75.5	75.5	5,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13	13	22,100
Security Bank Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	600
Union Bank of the Phil.	19.75	20	19.25	20	269,300
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.28	1,110,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1345	1345	1345	1345	350
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	20,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1045	1055	1045	1055	18,970
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	13,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	13,570,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	780	800	780	800	47,810
Ipeople Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	10,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.0625	0.045	0.0625	72,700,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	90,000
Piltel	0.57	0.59	0.57	0.57	9,020,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	60,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	515	515	510	515	193,120
Ivantage Corp.	0.57	0.6	0.57	0.6	2,590,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	90,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30.5	31	30	30.5	717,800
Manila Electric Co. B	42.5	45.5	42.5	45	3,267,600
Petron Corp.	1.96	1.98	1.92	1.96	10,181,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	138,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	2,600,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	60,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	310,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	110,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	100,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	60,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.5	370,100
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	135,500
RFM Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	616,000
San Miguel Corp. A	50.5	51	50	50	375,100
San Miguel Corp. B	68	68.5	66	66	122,200
Vitarich	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.69	0.73	0.69	0.73	80,000
Ayala Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6	3,722,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	1,009,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.87	0.85	0.85	1,430,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	131,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	40,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.83	0.86	0.83	0.85	33,000,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.155	0.155	430,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	1,000,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	1,680,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	25,360,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1.1	1	1.1	780,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31	31.5	30.5	30.5	506,600
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	200,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	550,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	330,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.94	412,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	136,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.02	0.018	0.02	3,300,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	1,800,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.86	0.87	0.86	0.87	260,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	8,280,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.36	4,910,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	930,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.4	1,610,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.18	0.17	0.18	2,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	10,000
Metro Alliance Holdings-B	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	600,000
Pryce Corp.	0.095	0.105	0.095	0.105	9,100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	1,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.45	16,210,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	220,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	100,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.46	0.52	0.46	0.52	1,550,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	830,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	13,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	31	31	30.5	30.5	829,400
DMCI Holdings Inc.- Pref.	785	795	785	795	350
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	775	790	775	790	9,910
Jollibee Warrants	14	14	14	14	1,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	623,000,000
RFM Corp. - Pref.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	30,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	25,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.7	10,353,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	170,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,670,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.56	31,750,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	4,630,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.1	2.14	2.02	2.14	30,471,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	500,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	1,720,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	50,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
SM Development Corp.	0.99	1.04	0.99	1.04	1,650,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	7	6.7	6.9	8,028,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.08	2,700,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0042	0.0048	0.0042	0.0046	40,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.039	0.044	0.039	0.042	38,400,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines B	0.042	0.046	0.042	0.046	1,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	900,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.004	0.004	27,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.005	0.0046	0.0048	416,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	9,700,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	20,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.024	0.021	0.024	102,100,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	101,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	14,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	51,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.25	1,090,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,722,570	126,802,110.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,111,910,351	526,071,179.00
PRO	93,792,000	210,414,380.00
Mining	533,230,000	4,433,800.00
OIL	272,290,000	4,408,100.00
GRAND TOTALS :	2,013,944,921	872,129,569.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	566.52	UP 2.43
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,939.98	UP 11.44
PRO	616.62	UP 8.60
Mining	1,420.11	U 13.00
OIL	2.30	DOWN 0.01
All Shares Index	755.59	UP 2.26
Composite	1,416.83	UP 9.34

NO. OF ADVANCES: 58; NO. OF DECLINES: 22; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 45;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 125; NO. OF TRADES: 4,486

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CANLUBANG GC	865,000	-------
CAPITOL HILLS	-------	115,000
CC AT TAGAYTAY	CALL NOW	330,000
CELEBRITY CLUB	200,000	-------
CLUB FILIPINO	250,000	-------
EAGLERIDGE "A"	-------	300,000
EAGLERIDGE "B"	500,000	-------
FOREST HILLS "A"	-------	230,000
LUISITA G&CC "A"	400,000	-------
MAKATI SPORTS "A"	-------	250,000
MANILA GOLF (INDIV)	-------	CALL NOW
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	13,000,000	-------
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,700,000	2,500,000
MIMOSA GC (INDIV)	250,000	-------
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	700,000	CALL NOW
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	800,000	-------
ORCHARD "A"/"C"	.25M/ 55M	-------
PUNTA FUEGO	750,000	-------
RIVIERA GCC "A"	225,000	-------
RIVIERA GCC "C"	-------	550,000
STA. ELENA "B"	-------	CALL NOW
SUBIC BAY GOLF	220,000	-------
SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (CORP)	-------	CALL NOW
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	CALL NOW	720,000
THE COUNTRY CLUB	CALL NOW	-------
WACK WACK GOLF	CALL NOW	6,500,000

AVAILABLE LESSORS FOR PLAYING RIGHTS

ALABANG CC "A"	25,000	ORCHARD "A"	10,000
CANLUBANG GC	55,000	STA. ELENA "A"	65,000
CC AT TAGAYTAY	20,000	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	30,000
MANILA GOLF	400,000	THE COUNTRY CLUB	CALL NOW
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	45,000	WACK WACK GOLF	90 000

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BSP urges . . .

From page B1

lend because it would be a business decision, the BSP chief encouraged the lenders to give small and medium enterprises access and to go around certain requirements of the regulators.

For instance, banks said that loans to SME were immediately classified as "loans specially mentioned" and would require a certain loan-loss provision. This discouraged banks from lending to small and medium companies.

Buenaventura said the banks could get a guarantee from the Small Business and Guarantee Finance Corp., a state-owned firm put up to help SMEs. "If they get a guarantee from SBGFC, the loan would be classified as regular and not specially mentioned," he said.

He said the cost of securing the guarantee that banks could pass on to the borrower anyway would be lower than the cost of the provisioning. "We can't forego provisioning because that is a prudential measure so banks have to find a legitimate way of going around them," the BSP chief explained.

Another option, according to Buenaventura, was to go to the Development Bank of the Philippines for co-financing.

"The SMEs are willing to pay a reasonable lending rate because they really need access (to credit)," he added.

Jollibee plans more stores in California

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. plans to expand its American presence this year by allocating more offshore investments for flagship brand Jollibee and newly acquired Tokyo Teriyaki House in California.

In an investors' briefing last Friday, JFC chief finance officer Miguel Jose Navarrete disclosed that the group was planning to put up five to 10 new stores in California this year for these two brands.

"There are very significant opportunities available to the group there, so we want to expand in California," Navarrete said.

He estimated that JFC would have to spend about $300,000 (or about P15 million) to put up each new store in California.

Overall, JFC is planning to earmark only P500 million out of its P1.5-billion capital expenditures budget for store expansion this year, lower than the P800 million spent for new stores last year.

There are five to 10 offshore stores planned for opening in 2002, representing the entire number of new stores to be put up in California.

The group currently has 23 offshore Jollibee stores, eight of them in the United States and four in Hong Kong.

JFC also recently acquired 90 percent of privately held Tokyo Teriyaki House, which operates one store in Vallejo, California, and formed a new unit called Tokyo Teriyaki Corp. to become the holding company.

Navarrete said the group was planning to bring the Tokyo Teriyaki house brand to the Philippines soon, but not likely within this year. The Japanese fast-food chain is expected to complement JFC's other quick-service restaurant brands.

JFC has also been planning to put up 15 Jollibee stores in every major market across the globe. The global slowdown aggravated by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, however, slowed down its expansion binge.

Aside from its flagship Jollibee brand, the JFC group also operates Chinese fast-food chain Chowking, pizza and pasta chain Greenwich and deli/sandwich chain Delifrance.

JFC has likewise exported its Chowking brand abroad. This brand has six offshore stores, three are in the United States and the other three in Dubai.

For this year, JFC is planning to put up 20-30 new stores for Jollibee, 15-20 for Chowking, 5-10 for Greenwich and 7-10 for Delifrance. There is a separate budget for the 5-10 new offshore stores.

Navarrete said JFC could finance its capital expenditures solely from internally generated funds this year, but noted that the group would not close its doors if there were low-cost financing opportunities available specially with the improving economic environment.

"The outlook for this year is conducive to business. We see our margins improving," he said.

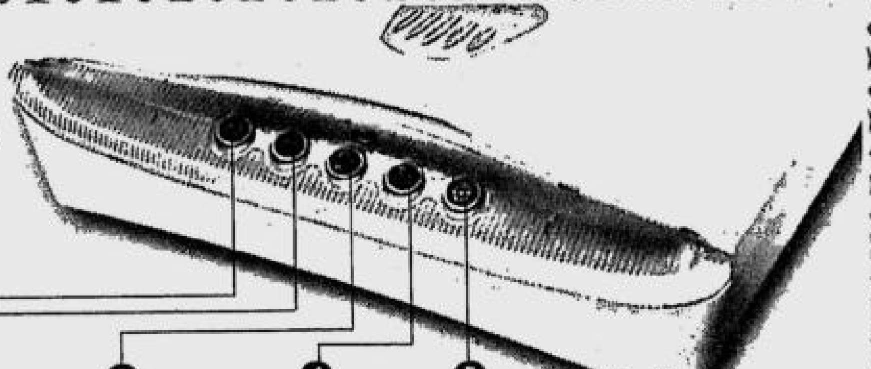
JFC is the dominant player in the fast-food business in the Philippines, the only country in the world where American fast-food giant McDonald's is not No. 1. As of end-2001, it has built a total of 833 local stores, of which 421 are for Jollibee, 194 for Greenwich, 194 for Chowking and 24 for Delifrance.

In 2001, JFC's net income after non-recurring items slumped by 37.1 percent to P950 million.

"Being in the business of selling food to the broad consumer market, JFC is more resilient to adverse economic conditions than most companies but it certainly is not immune. As a result, net income grew at a much lower rate than revenues. We continued to concentrate on improving our market position and providing our customers with better value for money," JFC chair and CEO Tony Tan Caktiong said.

CURRENCIES

Feb. 15, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.144034	1.000000	51.3340
Japan	Yen	0.008664	0.007573	0.3888
United Kingdom	Pound	1.637456	1.431300	73.4744
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.146860	0.128370	6.5897
Switzerland	Franc	0.674151	0.589275	30.2498
Canada	Dollar	0.718840	0.628338	32.2551
Singapore	Dollar	0.629628	0.550358	28.2521
Australia	Dollar	0.590317	0.515996	26.4881
Bahrain	Dinar	3.034734	2.652661	136.1717
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.305076	0.266667	13.6891
Brunei	Dollar	0.623452	0.544959	27.9749
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000098	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.026245	0.022941	1.1777
UAE	Dirham	0.311556	0.272331	13.9798
Korea	Won	0.000876	0.000766	0.0393
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.874100	44.8710
Brazil	Real	0.470796	0.411523	21.1251
Denmark	Kroner	0.134655	0.117702	6.0421
India	Rupee	0.023540	0.020576	1.0562
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.301141	0.263227	13.5125
Mexico	New Peso	0.126065	0.110193	5.6566
New Zealand	Dollar	0.480485	0.419992	21.5599
Norway	Kroner	0.128514	0.112334	5.7666
Pakistan	Rupee	0.019099	0.016694	0.8570
South Africa	Rand	0.099171	0.086685	4.4499
Sweden	Kroner	0.108549	0.094883	4.8707
Syria	Pound	0.022301	0.019493	1.0007
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032706	0.028588	1.4675
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001361	0.00119	0.0611



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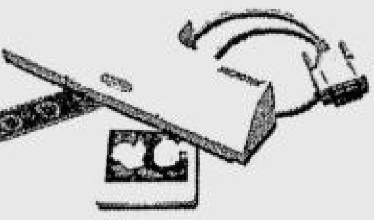

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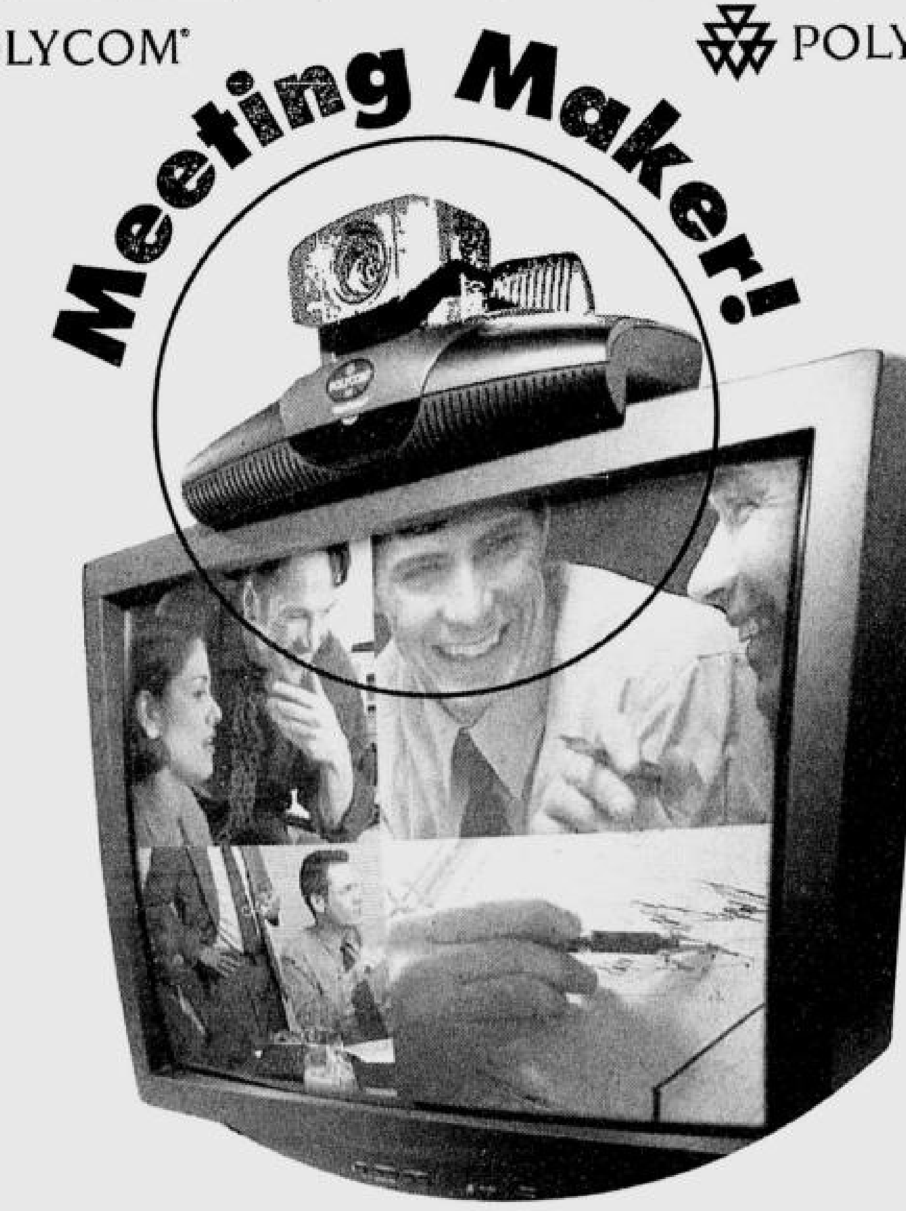

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Love affairs among employees

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

LAST week's celebration of Valentine's Day brought into focus once more the ticklish issue of dealing with personnel-related questions, about employee misconduct, sexual harassment, immorality and violation of the employers' Code of Discipline concerning relationships and affairs among employees.

By way of general principles, it should be stressed that while the company has the fundamental prerogative to lay down policies and formulate rules to govern personnel behavior, the basic human rights of employees as human beings should never be violated. It needs to be emphasized, too, that while every person has the freedom to love, his acts in pursuance of that love may be controlled by management within company premises or during office hours.

Sexual aggression within company premises

In a case involving a Mindanao firm (Navarro vs. Damasco), GR 101875, 14 July 1995, the Supreme Court affirmed the dismissal of a male employee who forced himself upon a female coworker. The sexual aggression took place inside the female employees' dormitory within the company compound.

The passionate lover pulled the girl toward him and when she fell down, the man threw himself on top of her. She resisted and shouted but the boy kissed and embraced her. The high court held that the offense called for the dismissal of the man from employment for the act constituted serious misconduct. While it was done outside office hours, the act was committed within the company's premises.

Sexual act during working hours

The highly popular *ponencia* of then Justice Narvasa was about a security coordinator of an IT firm who performed a sexual act with a female security guard during his tour of duty. The act was committed on a holiday when they were on duty on the office table of one manager. This was the Stanford Microsystems case (157 SCRA 410).

The thing that made it more blatant was that the macho security supervisor was aware that there was a third security personnel who witnessed the perpetration of the sexual congress from the moment it started until it was consummated. The high tribunal condemned the immoral behavior as deserving of the severest penalty, which is termination of employment.

The question of immorality

What is immoral to one employer may be perfectly acceptable to another. There is no universal standard of morality. Thus, it is imprudent to generalize on the behavior of employees, including executives and managers. Different folks, different strokes. What is sauce to the goose may not be to the gander.

For instance, when a high school teacher in an exclusive girls' school solicits a date with a student, even if it is only to a movie or a "gimmick" in some bar, that is a serious offense in the academic community. But when a handsome pharmaceutical sales rep dates with a lady doctor, or the wife of the hospital owner, and thereafter, obtain an exclusivity sales contract worth millions of pesos in sales, some firms wouldn't really mind. They'd call it by another name, certainly not immorality. Perhaps, market penetration.

Immorality in schools

But while our norms are somehow tolerant to sales reps and agents, our standards for academic personnel are quite exacting, even unforgiving. For teachers handle a very delicate mission, the future of our kids. Mentors act in place of parents and they are behavior models.

In one case (Divine Word vs. NLRC, GR 72207, Aug. 6, 1996), the high court held that a school principal deserved to lose his job for having a love affair with a minor pupil. In Bulacan, two teachers, both married, had an affair that scandalized the campus. The woman resigned and the man was fired. The court ruled that his firing was valid (Santos vs. NLRC, GR 115795, March 6, 1998).

Sexual harassment

The law defines sexual harassment as an illegal act committed by an employer, manager, supervisor, employer's agent, teacher, instructor, professor and coach who demands, requires or requests any sexual favor from someone upon whom he wields authority, influence or moral ascendancy.

Specific acts of sexual harassment include a sexual favor made as a condition for hiring, wage increase, promotion, privileges or training opportunities. They may also encompass a green joke, language, actions and exhibitionists behavior causing undue vexation, embarrassment and shock upon others.

Touch and caress

An engineer and manager was administratively punished by suspension for touching and caressing the nape and shoulder of his boss' secretary. The court scolded him. As a managerial employee, he is bound by a more exacting work ethics. He was assessed and found wanting. (Libres vs. NLRC, GR 123737, May 28, 1999).

In an earlier case, an executive was charged by a female casual worker of bringing her to a motel instead of her house at dawn after a company party. In condemning such immoral act, the high court declared that he failed to live up to his higher standard of responsibility when he succumbed to his moral perversity. (DCV vs. NLRC, GR 106341, Sept. 2, 1994).

Top guy's sexual obsession

In one case, the Supreme Court granted moral damages to a company nurse who was the object of a series of harassment by the top executive of a plant. The top guy became so obsessed with the nurse that he took it personally when she rejected her. He dismissed the nurse.

To conclude, we state that the freedom to love is absolute as long as the lover keeps it to himself. The moment he starts to act in pursuit of such love, however, the state, the company and society may install mechanisms to control it. Love affairs are harmless as long as they remain to be love without any illicit acts.

It is within the employees' perfect right to love each other as long as this won't affect work or create a scandal, or else they can be disciplined and even fired for it.

(For comments, you can reach the writer at the following e-mail address: josephus.jimenez@pcppi.com.ph.)

Agri department embarks on new lending program

MONTEMAYOR (right) and Buenaflor at the launch of the financing program.

BREAKING conventional lending practices, the Department of Agriculture begins this week the implementation of a new, client-friendly agricultural and fishery financing scheme that seeks to bring timely and affordable credit to millions of farmers and fisher folks.

The new system foregoes the usual collateral requirements, the tedious and cumbersome loan application process and other inconveniences typical in the lending business.

"We're starting a revolution in rural credit financing," Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said.

He said that the new lending mode would even unleash fresh government and private funds into the capital market to stimulate rural development. This, in turn, is expected to create thousands of jobs and help the Macapagal administration meet its commitment to fight unemployment and reduce widespread poverty.

To pilot test the funding scheme, the Department of Agriculture picked 10 small- and medium-scale projects in various locations, costing a total of P100 million and involving some 5,000 farmers, fishermen and agri-entrepreneurs or 500 farmers per site. Each of the beneficiaries will be allowed to borrow from Quedancor an average of P20,000 in production loan. The projects were pre-screened by Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor), the department's credit guarantee company.

One project, in Malita, Davao del Sur, will focus on corn and cassava production. Another, in Kabacan, North Cotabato, will engage in multiple cropping or intercropping that will feature rubber, tropical fruits, rice and corn, with technical support from the University of Southern Mindanao, Montemayor said.

Seven others will take off in Luzon, including a fishery project with vegetable and rice production in Jala Jala, Rizal; a rice, corn and hydroponic vegetable project in San Ildefonso, Bulacan; a corn, tobacco, rice, vegetable and cotton farm in Sta. Maria, Pangasinan, and a corn, rice and banana business in Cabarroguis, Quirino.

Montemayor said the guiding principle and the operational strategy to make the innovative funding scheme work was called 'Buenaflor model,' named after its designer, Nelson Buenaflor, president and CEO of Quedancor.

Buenaflor said that under the scheme, loan processing would take only about 15 working days and the loan amount could reach the maximum of P50,000 payable in six to 36 months.

Clients are charged an interest of one percent a month or 12 percent a year, plus a nonrefundable service fee of 2.5 percent of the outstanding principal loan to cover Quedancor's operational and administrative cost.

The 12-percent interest rate is way below commercial bank rates and the 16.5-percent interest on loans charged to Thai farmers and agricultural cooperatives by the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) of Thailand.

Processing begins with prospective borrowers attending a Quedancor orientation seminar. After passing the usual background and credit investigation procedure following the seminar, the clients are grouped into teams, each consisting of five to 15 persons who belong to the same community and are raising similar crops or livestock.

Every team will select a leader, who will be trained by Quedancor on various skills like leadership, project management, credit and collateral management, and value formation.

"The idea is to tap the team leader to become an administrative arm of Quedancor," Buenaflor said. "Instead of us hiring a social worker to form unorganized individuals for an economic activity and a collector to ensure that borrowed funds are paid back on time, we train the leader to do the job," he explained.

In return, the leader of the self-reliant team or SRT, as the new entity is called, gets economic perks, including exemption from paying Quedancor's service fee equivalent to 2.5 percent of his loan amount, plus a commission equivalent to 25 percent of the interest income derived from his group.

A third financial incentive is the opening by Quedancor of a current account in the team leader's name, which could go from P2,000 to P5,000, depending on a depository bank's minimum required daily balance.

BayanTel urges creditors to approve debt relief plan

By Abigail L. Ho

CASH-STRAPRED Bayan Telecommunications Inc. hopes to have its creditors approve the revised debt restructuring proposal for its $477 million worth of debts soon, as it prepares to venture into the tightly competitive cellular phone service arena.

In an interview last week, BayanTel chief finance officer Gary Olivar said the company was already working out the implementation procedures with its secured creditors.

"We're continuing to meet with the creditors, especially the secured banks. We're working out some issues on how to proceed and to implement the restructuring agreement," he said.

He added that discussions with the Lopez-owned firm's secured creditors "have improved a lot," and that a final approval could be secured before this year ends.

As for the unsecured creditors, Olivar said he had not received a word from them lately, but he was planning to talk to them again within the current month or next.

A company source revealed that major changes were made in the restructuring terms. These include a proposed 10-percent debt-to-equity swap as well as the shortening of debts' maturity from 15 years to eight years.

BayanTel earlier asked its unsecured creditors to condone 25 percent of its principal debts and write off 18 months of interests beginning Jan. 19 on a portion of its total obligations.

Creditors disapproved the proposal prompting BayanTel to revise the debt restructuring terms.

BayanTel's creditor-banks include Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Land Bank of the Philippines, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Equitable PCI Bank, United Coconut Planters Bank, Deutsche Bank, Standard Chartered Bank and JP Morgan Chase.

Olivar said one thing that could possibly speed up the approval of the telecommunications firm's debt restructuring proposal was the recent Supreme Court decision allowing it to keep its license to offer cellular services.

"This development is an incentive for all parties to come to an agreement," he said.

Meanwhile, with its eventual foray into the wireless market, Olivar said it was prepared to engage in a partnership with rival firm Express Telecommunications Co.

Despite Extelcom's efforts to contest the Supreme Court decision, a partnership was not a far-fetched notion.

"Clearly they have the right to do what they want, but I think we should respect the Supreme Court's decision and move forward," he said.

News earlier came out that Extelcom would welcome a partnership with BayanTel for its own global system for mobile communication (GSM) business. BayanTel owns 47 percent of Extelcom.

"In the spirit of moving forward, I'll take them up on that offer," he said.

Olivar added that joining forces with Extelcom would benefit both of the carriers as they break into the already tightly competitive digital cellular service arena.

Extelcom already has the infrastructure and the people as well as some cellular frequencies that will, combined with BayanTel's own frequencies, allow them to serve more customers, he explained.

LBP to transfer ₱17B in bad loans to AMC

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE LAND Bank of the Philippines is planning to dispose of some P17 billion worth of nonperforming loans through an asset management company.

Landbank currently holds about P26.8 billion in NPLs. The amount accounts for 22 percent of the bank's total loan portfolio.

NPLs are loans that are past due, meaning neither the principal nor the interests were paid for at least 90 days after maturity.

"We are seriously looking at offloading a portion of our non-performing assets to an AMC," said Landbank president Margarito Teves in a press conference last week.

An AMC is an entity that absorbs a bank's unwanted assets by buying them at a discount. It rehabilitates the assets and sells them for profit.

There are at least six foreign investors that have expressed their interest in acquiring Landbank's bad loans and non performing assets. These include US-based Lehman Brothers, JP Morgan Chase, Cerberus and Lonestar.

"We are actively marketing our Ropoas (real and other properties owned and acquired) for sale or lease. Also part of our recovery measures are restructuring, foreclosure and *dacion en pago* arrangements (payment in kind)," Teves added.

For this year, Landbank does not expect any increase in its loan portfolio, currently at P104 billion, as it intends to minimize its investments in government securities and to increase its exposure to agriculture-related projects.

"This is a step that hopefully will bring us closer to increasing the bank's loan portfolio for agriculture-related activities to a high of 65 percent by year 2004. Our present exposure to the sector is only at 38 percent," added Teves.

Landbank's loan portfolio last year increased by only one percent to P4.1 billion from P3.9 billion.

NEWS BRIEFS

'Clean shop' campaign

IN LINE with its efforts to reduce software piracy in the country, Microsoft Philippines Inc. has embarked on a seven-month educational program on the subject through its "clean shop" campaign.

The campaign aims to educate consumers on the requirements of buying original software for their PCs and to protect their interest by providing a community of system builders committed to selling original software.

The "clean shop" campaign draws a large network of Microsoft system builders who pledge to sell original software products with new PCs and support Microsoft in educating consumers on the risks of buying pirated software.

In return, Microsoft commits to provide support system builders through a marketing campaign, which offers special incentives and endorsement from the company.

C. Jennifer Abaca-Lai, business development director of Microsoft Philippines, said that the campaign is part of a larger initiative undertaken by Microsoft in its fight against software piracy in the country.

BPI Family's auto madness

BPI Family Bank, the leading auto loan provider in the country, is bringing back this year Auto Madness to treat car buyers and car enthusiasts. It has become a tradition for BPI Family Bank to stage these exclusive events in key cities around the country each year.

The Happy Family Auto Loan, which features low interest rates, easy down payment schemes and one-day credit decision, will be showcased in the 2002 Auto Madness on the following dates: Cebu City from March 7 to 10, Cagayan de Oro from March 14 to 17, Bacolod from March 15 to 17, Dagupan from April 12 to 14, Davao from April 18 to 21, Lipa from April 19 to 21 and Iloilo from April 26 to 28.

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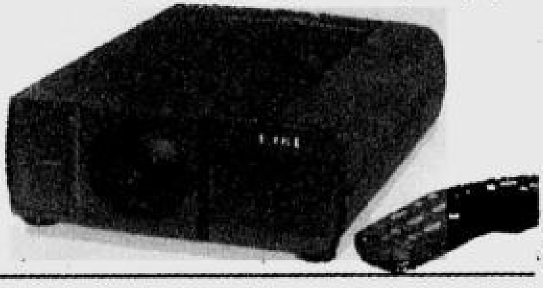

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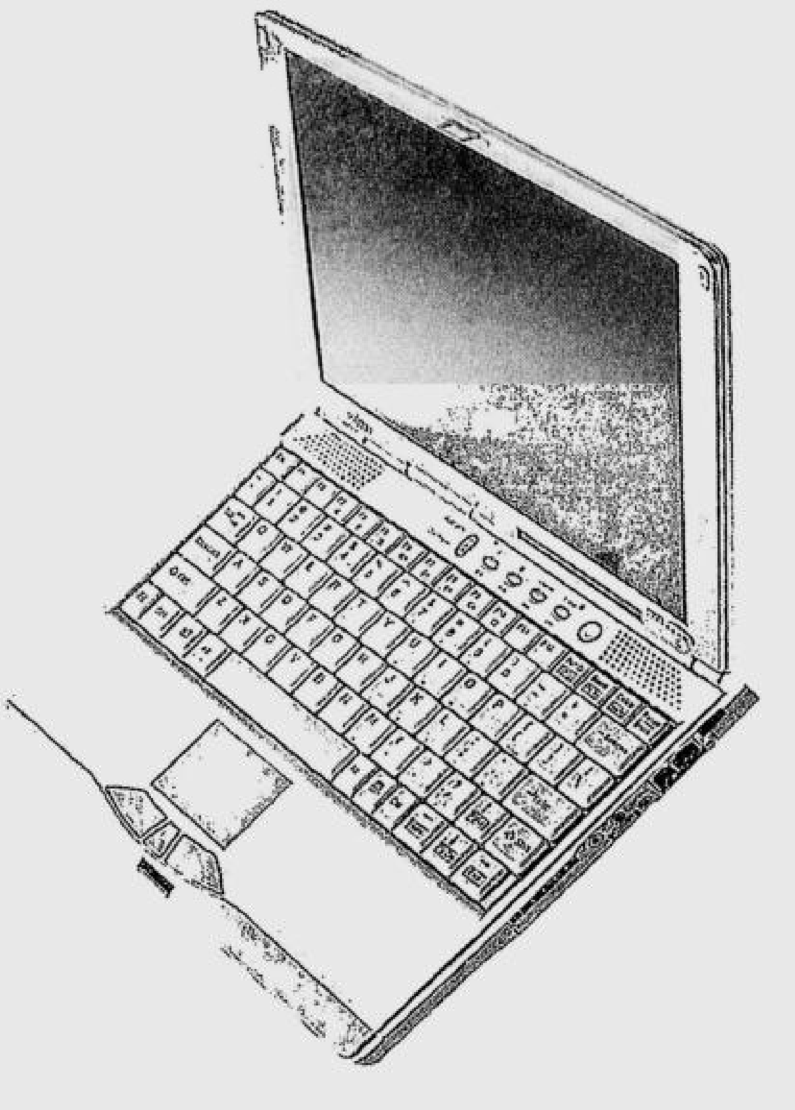

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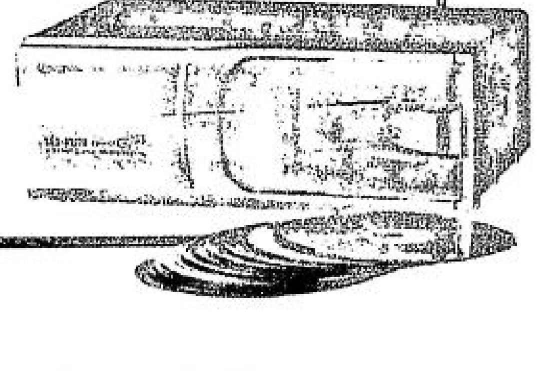
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US, EU headed for virtual trade war over online VAT

WASHINGTON—A new transatlantic trade skirmish is brewing over a European Union plan to require retailers to collect value-added taxes on online sales to European customers.

EU finance minister this week approved the plan to require the tax to be collected on "digital products," which included music, computer games and software downloaded as well as to subscription-based and pay-per-view radio and television broadcasting.

The plan, which must be finalized by the European Parliament, is to take effect July 1, 2003.

But the digital tax threatens to be the latest in a series of skirmishes over tax policies that have the United States and European Union at odds.

US officials and the US high-tech industry contend this plan discriminates against non-EU companies by requiring them to charge higher rates in some case than their EU counterparts.

"We are extremely disappointed at something that can only be called protectionism in the cyber age," said Harris Miller, president of the Information Technology Association of America.

Miller said the plan created a "complicated, if not impossible," tax burden on small businesses by requiring them to verify customer locations and deal with various VAT rates in the different EU countries, ranging from 15 to 25 percent.

The plan requires a US or other non-EU firm that sells to EU customers to determine the location of purchasers and charge the VAT rate specific to that country.

AFP

Experts see sparks of recovery

WASHINGTON—US manufacturers, lying at the battered heart of the US recession, may finally be on the mend, experts said Friday after the release of January industrial output data.

Factories, power plants and mines together reined back production 0.1 percent in January, for the sixth monthly cut in a row, the Federal Reserve said, only slightly milder than Wall Street's expectations.

But factories alone held output steady, and they actually stepped up production of big-ticket items.

"If there is a story in this report, it is the continued astonishing improvement in manufacturing productivity," said David Orr, chief economist at Wachovia Securities.

Foreign exchange traders chose instead to pull their hair out over a consumer confidence index compiled by the University of Michigan, which fell to 90.9 points in early February from 93 points in January.

As a result, the euro advanced to 87.33 US cents from 87.19 US cents in European trade.

Analysts, however, said the latest figures showed encouraging signs for the US economy.

Manufacturing output, which has dropped in 14 of the past 15 months, was flat in January, averting a further decline largely due to a substantial rebound in steel production.

Durable manufactured goods production edged up 0.1 percent while non-durable manufactured goods output eased 0.2 percent.

"Industrial production fell in January as there were large declines in mining and utilities," said Naroff Economic Advisors president Joel Naroff.

"But we may have finally gotten the signal we were looking for. Durable goods output actually rose and total manufacturing production was flat, and that is goods news."

US industry has reined back output every month but one since September 2000, however, he noted. On a year-on-year basis, industrial production in January slumped 5.2 percent.

But you have to stop falling before you can start growing and the manufacturing sector might have reached that point," Naroff said.

"More importantly, the firming in the business equipment sector points to the possibility that investment may start to increase again," he added.

"When that happens, we will know that the economy has turned completely around as businesses will have started to show some confidence in the future."

Motor vehicle production slipped 1.2 percent, output by utilities eased 0.7 percent and mining production fell 0.5 percent in January.

But output of business equipment rose 0.4 percent, the first increase since August 2000.

Production of computers, communications equipment, and semiconductors—a broad measure of the high technology sector—advanced 0.6 percent after being unchanged in December.

The US Federal Open Market Committee, which held the key interest rate steady in January at 1.75 percent after chopping it 11 times over 13 months, may even start thinking about tightening, Naroff said.

"Maybe the manufacturing sector is still hurting, but it is on the mend. And so is the economy," he said.

"How strong manufacturing has to be before the FOMC tightens is unclear. But with the labor market looking like it is no longer a problem, it might not take much for the Fed to decide it is time to unwind some of the post-Sept. 11th easings."

Merrill Lynch economist Stan Shipley said he expected production to rise about 3.5 percent over the next month as companies finally ended their reliance on inventories to meet demand.

AFP

Toys for toddlers seen as a big growth market

NEW YORK—Your playful toddler doesn't know it, or care, but he is a hot marketing target for toy manufacturers looking to grab a slice of the growing preschool segment of toy sales.

Proving there are big bucks to be made in that area, a study by NPD Funworld, a business unit of The NPD Group that tracks industry trends, says the preschool category has maintained above industry growth for three consecutive years.

In fact, infant and preschool toy sales increased 13.8 percent in 2001, while overall toy industry sales were up just 1.7 percent, Patrick Feely, chair of the Toy Industry Association Inc., said in opening remarks at the 99th annual American International Toy Fair in New York this week.

"It's increasingly strong in a lot of different ways," independent toy industry consultant and columnist Christopher Byrne told Reuters. "There's classic preschool, (toys for) gross and fine motor skills, fine playsets like rescue heroes and higher end toys."

To the delight of parents, preschool toys have become more interactive, with many taking their cues from popular television programs.

And toy company representatives can be downright giddy talking about the hot licensing properties they have secured from hit television shows such as Nickelodeon's "Blue's Clues," "Dora the Explorer" and PBS KIDS' "Clifford the Big Red Dog"—all highly recognizable and with the potential to boost a company's bottom line when parents—and generous grandparents—go shopping.

"In 1998, 'Blue's Clues' became the fastest-growing preschool property to be introduced in a decade," Leigh Anne Brodsky, senior vice president of consumer products at Nickelodeon, told Reuters, adding that Blue and friends have since raked in some $2.7 billion in US retail sales.

"It's changed the way preschoolers play and interact with television," she said.

Blue can be found in just about any retail outlet in the form of books, sheets, clothing, snacks and, of course, a variety of toys.

New additions to the "Blue's Clues" line-up at this year's Toy Fair included, from Fisher-Price: Joe's Learning Letters ($19.99), for teaching children phonics and ABCs; "Blue's Clues" Imagination Music Studio ($29.99), where kids can record their own voices; and Big Hugs Blue ($34.99), a plush interactive Blue who barks "I love you" when kissed on her nose. From JAKKS Pacific, Joe's Handy Dandy (wipe-off) Notebook and giant crayon are priced at $4.99.

The notebook, by the way, is "Joe's" because in April, "Steve" (Steven Burns) will pack up his striped rugby shirt after five years on the popular show, and Donovan Patton will take over as Blue's best human friend "Joe." Preschoolers will be told that Steve is going off to college and his younger brother, Joe, will look after Blue.

Meantime, Dora, a 7-year-old Latina girl who lives inside a computer and goes on imaginative adventures, has the No. 1 preschool show on commercial television for ages 2 to 5 with "Dora the Explorer." Licensees and retailers are also looking for her toy offerings to be big sellers, especially with Hispanic children who were basically left out of that niche until Dora burst onto the scene.

"She (Dora) is usually helping somebody or on a mission to do something for someone," Kevin Curran, general manager for Fisher-Price character brands, said at Toy Fair. "She goes out there and accomplishes things, (which) builds a sense of self-esteem for girls, while also teaching some Spanish words."

Dora and her pal, Boots the monkey, explore their world while encouraging lively bilingual interaction with young viewers.

Fisher-Price this week unveiled the We Did It! Dancing Dora ($29.99), doll who moves and sings "We Did It" and says phrases in English and Spanish.

The Explore & Find Playset ($19.99) comes with a roll-out Map play board and figures of Dora, Boots and Swiper the fox in the all-important (to a preschooler) Backpack carrying case; and Talking Friends Boots and Swiper react to having their soft tummies squeezed ($12.99).

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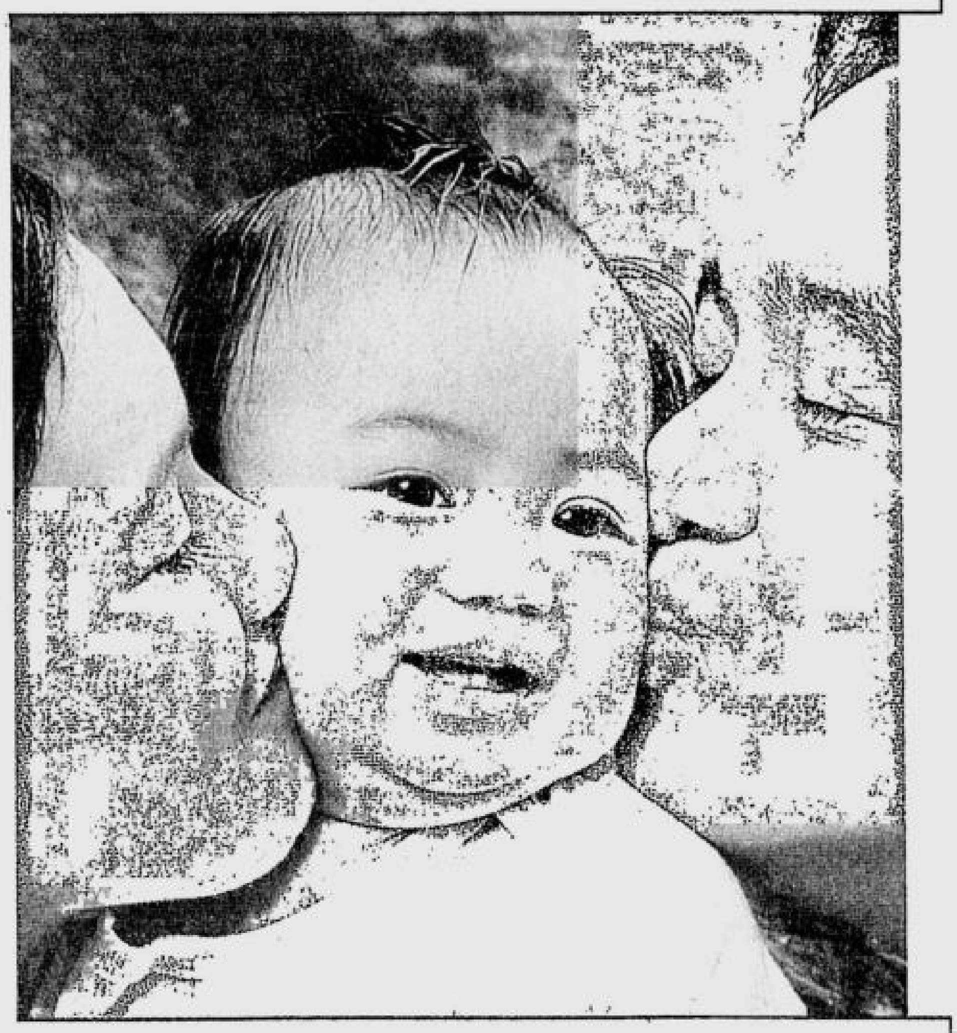

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TECHNOLOGY and LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
The Power of Knowledge

Message

The Technology and Livelihood Resource Center (TLRC) marks its 25th anniversary at a most auspicious juncture. These are very exciting and interesting times, when rapid developments challenge our resolve to do our utmost in improving the quality of life of our people. We are in a difficult period when this challenge has become more complex, and when the formulas and frameworks of old do not necessarily apply.

Through the years, anti-poverty programs were geared exclusively to addressing income poverty. Policymakers and experts thought that overall economic growth would necessarily trickle down to the masses. Now, we all know better and realize that we cannot improve the quality of people's lives or address poverty without the people's participation nor can we stop at reducing income poverty. There is a critical process of empowering people, helping them identify their resources and assets, and transforming these into potent weapons for generating wealth and improving people's lives.

I give emphasis to human resources because, in the final analysis, this is where economic solutions will rise and fall. An uninspired, unempowered and unenlightened. people with no confidence on what they have and where they are going, can never hope to see their lives changed.

In all these, the role of the TLRC therefore assumes great significance. It is the single entity in government that can benefit from the wealth of lessons learned in charting and carrying out a program for helping people use technology to transform their assets into wealth for the country and for themselves. Take note that its original mandate, under Presidential Decree 1097 in 1977, was to use technology to bring the country towards industrialization, anchored on the ability of industries to compete effectively in the domestic and global markets.

This broad mandate gained some direction and substance in the six key programs subsequently initiated by TLRC: technology assessment and registry, technology development, information services, a techno bank, a computer center and special programs.

Today, as it faces the challenge of helping this administration fulfill its promise of good governance and economic growth, the TLRC I am happy to say, continues to provide critical support through its three major services: technology and livelihood information dissemination and training; development funding; and information technology services.

The TLRC is an indispensable partner in advancing socio-economic goals and alleviating poverty, primarily by promoting technology-based livelihood projects in selected zones and centers where anti-poverty programs are priority concerns. But the TLRC has also reached a point where it can marshal its knowledge and past experience, and its vast network of people, who generate, use, and benefit from technology; to contribute more substantially to our national development agenda.

It is heartening to note the development of TLRC into an institution that puts premium on knowledge power and the use of information technology to further the spread of technology. Beyond having provided livelihood opportunities that improved one million Filipino lives through credit-lending schemes and technology transfers, TLRC keeps pace with the challenge of globalization. Today, it is a lot easier to gain access to information about technologies, markets and prices, supplies, services, from TLRC's e-library. Today, it is quicker to generate results from technology training and initiatives and share results and lessons from ventures big and small.

In sum, the TLRC, as I see it today, is helping people reach out and reach up to attain greater heights. I support TLRC in all its endeavors in bringing people and technology together in seamless fashion and for beneficial results.

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL - ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Message

This milestone in the Center's history is a most opportune time for us to acknowledge and thank our partners, for their support over these 24 years in all our efforts to support government's visions of a better life for our countrymen.

We thank the thousands of individual entrepreneurs, SMEs and hundreds of NGOs and cooperatives who have worked with us in the delivery of our products and services. They have contributed to our growth as an institution and to the knowledge and experience we had acquired throughout those years. In more ways than one, they had helped make the TLRC what it is today.

It is from these learnings that we had acquired with our partners in progress as we would like to call them, that we will build the foundations of our next twenty-five years.

Our commemoration of this milestone is also an opportune time for us to let our publics know that we have finetuned the Center's programs towards a faster and more efficient means of services delivery that shall utilize modern tools of knowledge acquisition and dissemination. We have called these our Impact Projects: the E-library, the TLRC distance learning via satellite system, the establishment of technology and livelihood zones in strategic areas of the country and the attunement of our services for the poor through enhanced programs for our overseas Filipino investors and those in the urban areas.

We look forward to the same unstinting support from our partners and from the filipino public.

FEDERICO A. LAXA
Director-General

TLRC Marks First 25 years

On February 23, 2002, the Technology and Livelihood Resource Center will be marking its 25th year founding anniversary. Founded in 1977 through Presidential Decree 1097, the TLRC is a government corporation under the Office of the President mandated to generate livelihood opportunities for Filipinos with the general intention of eradicating poverty through information dissemination, trainings, funding assistance and other related services.

Through its first 25 years, the TLRC has been spearheading the government's drive to combat poverty and has contributed to national development specifically in the technology and livelihood transfer, enhancement of resources, and people empowerment, benefiting hundreds of thousands of people who have learned how to become self-productive in their local communities.

TLRC has shown significant success in its drive to encourage local productivity as evidenced by development projects such as the Export Industry Modernization Program (EIMP) that assisted non-traditional industries, the BLISS II Program for rural communities, the Urban Livelihood Program, and the technology Utilization Support System that advances the commercialization of appropriate technologies.

Through the years, TLRC's services benefited 1.4 million people while providing nearlyP5 billion in credit assistance to individuals, NGOs, LGUs and SMEs. It has trained over 270,000 people and helped generate for the country an average of US$586.5 million annually.

TLRC also sold over one million copies of its publications and has served over two million databank/library users.

PAGCOR helps create income opportunities in depressed areas.

There is more to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation than just casinos, than just providing gaming and leisure activities. Among the many roles it plays and the many tasks it performs, PAGCOR helps fund livelihood projects to make life a little better for people in depressed communities.

In the last six years, at least 82 livelihood projects were financed by the President's Social Fund, to which a big portion of casino income goes. These have given hundreds of families, whose lives are among the millions PAGCOR has touched, not only a source of income, but also renewed hope and confidence in themselves, to become useful and productive citizens. Because, in more ways than one, PAGCOR matters. And PAGCOR cares.

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TECHNOLOGY and LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
The Power of Knowledge

The Power of Knowledge: The Force That Will Drive TLRC Into The Next 25 Years

TLRC under Director General Federico A. Laxa renews its commitment in generating social and economic progress for the Filipinos by undertaking measures to hasten and provide more efficient delivery of services to the Filipinos in the next 25 years and beyond.

TLRC's Seven Impact Projects

TLRC will be launching seven Impact Projects intended to expedite the delivery of services to the people and provide more efficient applications to livelihood activities in the country.

Using the help of the local governments through the Technology and Livelihood Development Centers (TLDC's), TLRC intends to tap all available resources from the remotest barangays to the more distant overseas Filipino workers, hoping that these could encourage self-productivity and increase economic activity in the local communities.

The TLRC aims to accomplish this goal with the following Projects:

- **Electronic Library**
  TLRC enters the Internet Age with this project. Now knowledge gained from the Center's experience can be accessed electronically through the Internet. Entrepreneurs can now research from the center's databank of about 20,000 titles on technology, livelihood and market information by logging on the web. This program enables people from the distant provinces to research valuable information directly from where they are stationed. They can access data from their homes or they can make use of Internet-ready facilities of the local government partners of TLRC and Livelihood Development Centers in their area.
- **Distance Learning**
  This allows people from the provinces to stay in their local communities learning business opportunities through interactive communication with the use of satellite technology.
- **Technology and Livelihood Zones**
  A partnership with LGUs involving the setting up of mini-economic zones in municipalities, cities or provinces to serve as " incubators" for small business ventures. These zones aim to stimulate the increase of economic activity in local communities and enable TLRC to participate directly in nation building.
- **Greater Multi-Media Access(GMA)**
  This project involves roving Technovans equipped with audio-visual equipment and video and print library. These vans will be made available to local government units for livelihood information dissemination. This will also guide also enterprising Filipinos by providing the necessary information on who to succeed in their business.
- **Re-integration Program for the Overseas Filipino Investors (OFI's)**
  The project aims to encourage our dollar-earning kababayans residing or working abroad to invest their savings in the country and prepares them to be re-integrated into the domestic economy.
- **TLRC-Kalahi Entrepreneurship Development Program**
  In support of the government's poverty reduction program, appropriate livelihood projects will be launched to aid the poor in becoming self-sufficient.
- **TLRC Silver Book**
  A collection of success stories of individual Pinoy entrepreneurs, the book aims to inspire local entrepreneurs to work harder in their business ventures.

In the future, TLRC is envisioning the use of cable television as a means of reaching more people. It plans on putting up educational-cum instructional programs that will help viewers learn a trade . With the e-Library fully operational soon, offering on-line courses will not be too far behind.

Federico A. Laxa
Director General, TLRC

Harnessing New Technology To Reach The Remotest Barangay

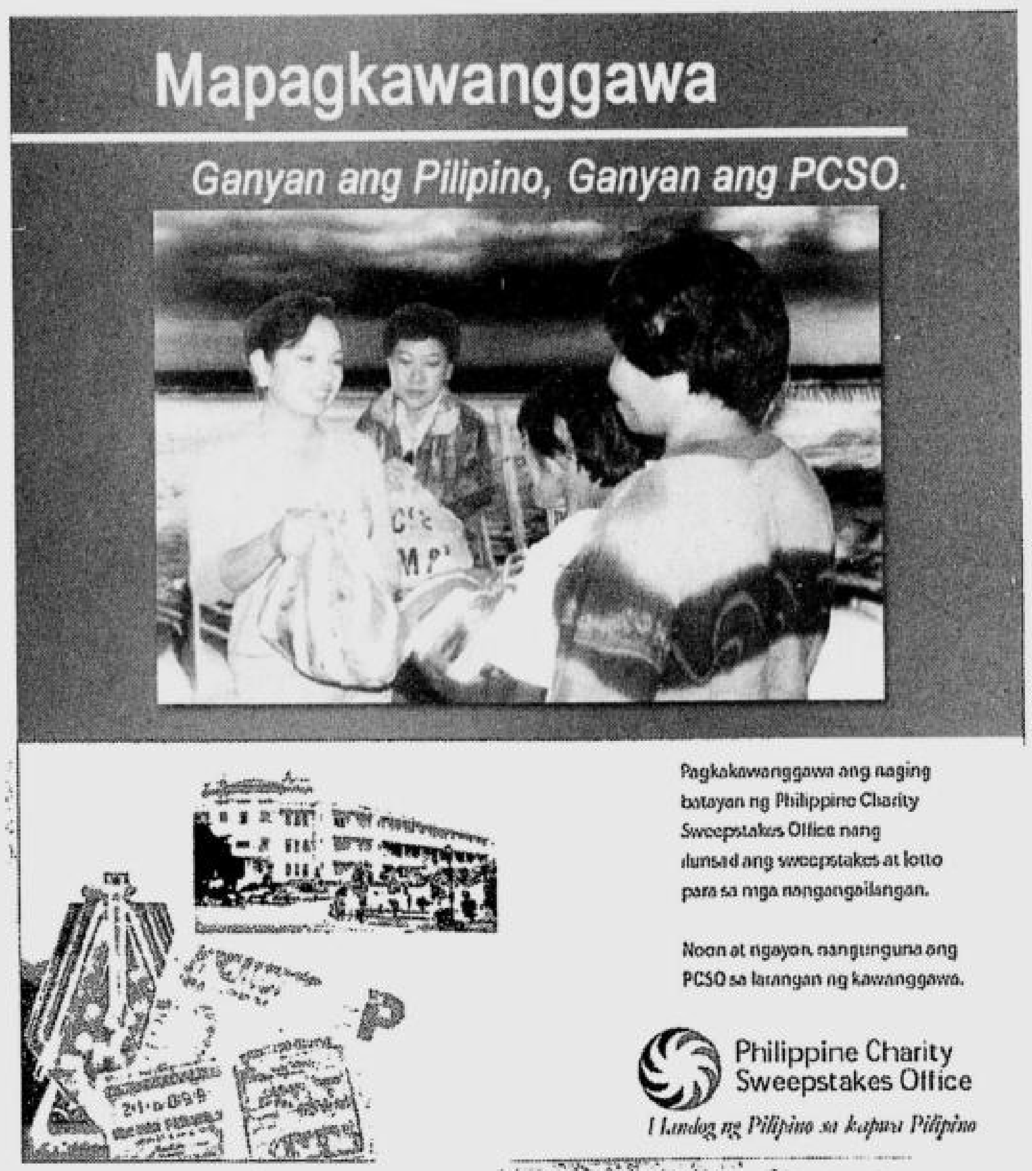
Federico A.Laxa is a balik-TLRCian. Laxa joined the agency in 1977, the agency's foundation year, as head of its Techno-Economics Unit under the Technology/Assessment and Registry Program. Supervising technology packages and undertaking special economic, technological, and social projects, Laxa would later transfer to the Ministry of Human Settlements a view of looking into possible projects to be assisted by international bodies like the World bank and USAID. The shift allowed him to work on housing development schemes for low- and moderate-income groups as deputy director of the Private Sites and Services Project Office and officer-in-charge of the MHS's Shelter Development Group.

It was during his stint at MHS that he discovered the importance of partnership between the private sector and government to bring about development. Moving on to the private sector as a progressive-minded real-estate developer, Laxa launched many successful real-estate projects in Cagayan de Oro, Bulacan, and Cebu. Later, he ran successfully for Mayor of Macabebe Pampanga, on a platform of "Kabuhayan at Kapayapaan." His short stint as a local government official gave him insights on the LGU as a catalyst for development and progress at the grassroots level.

That's why when he was called by President Macapagal-Arroyo to head back to TLRC, he had no doubt he would succeed. As he said:"Hindi mo ako mapapasok sa isang bagay na hindi ako sigurado." Growing up in Pampanga and raised by parents who valued good education, a consistent class valedictorian, Laxa has always believed in good preparation in every endeavor he gets involved in. In a sense, Laxa feels that all his life previous to his appointment as DG was a preparation for this one big job to propel TLRC into the twenty first century.

Believing that TLRC has a vast storehouse of knowledge, Laxa intends to use this knowledge to power the Philippine economy. But first it must be made available to the greatest number of people possible. And to do it, Laxa is moving the entire agency towards the harnessing of the new technology to make information dissemination and access move at electronic speeds. "I'd like to think that I did not squander this opportunity to do my own bit. I'd like to be known as the one who pushed hard for the e-library."

No doubt, once Laxa's projects get going, people in the countryside hungry for livelihood information will agree that this DG is the right man at the right place at the right time.



Mapagkawanggawa
Ganyan ang Pilipino, Ganyan ang PCSO.

Pagkakawanggawa ang naging batayan ng Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office nang ilunsad ang sweepstakes at lotto para sa mga nangangailangan.

Noon at ngayon, nangunguna ang PCSO sa larangan ng kawanggawa.

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office
I Lindog ng Pilipino sa kapwa Pilipino

Compliments of

SINCE 1928
MANTRADE

Compliments of

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

Compliments of

Architect Rene V. Bongalonta
Manager

VATICAN CONSTRUCTION & GENERAL SERVICES
FIX+PLUS EXPRESS
"YOUR HOME SERVICES COMPANY"

#24 San Rafael St.
Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City
E-mail:fixplus@odpi.com

Tel. Nos.: 636-7034
Pager No.:1481-124058
Cellphone No.:0917-9068445

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Republic of the Philippines

TECHNOLOGY and LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
The Power of Knowledge

GMA to Keynote Today's Opening of TLRC Trade Fair 2002

The Trade Fair will be the highlight of TLRC's silver anniversary celebration. To be held at the Megatrade 1 of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City from February 18 to 24, it will showcase the products and services of more than a hundred TLRC-supported entrepreneurs, business groups, cooperatives and people's organizations from all over the country, including LGUs and NGOs.

Aside from the marketing of products and services, the exhibit also serves a venue for the participants to exchange information and ideas, continue their education, and participate in business consultations sponsored by TLRC.

The event's theme, "Teknolohiya at Kabuhayan, Susi sa Kaunlaran," expresses the unwavering commitment of TLRC to foster social and economic development throughout the country, as it embarks on a bigger mission with the launching of seven Impact Projects that aim to fast track the government's commitment to wipe out poverty.

Silver Anniversary Program of Activities

Day 1
February 18, 2002 • 1:30 p.m.
Megatrade Hall 1, Building B, SM Megamall
Opening of the TLRC Trade Fair and Opening Program

Theme: Teknolohiya at Kabuhayan Susi sa Kaunlaran

Highlights: Launching of the Seven Impact Projects of the TLRC by Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines. Over 100 exhibits and sales Booths showcasing products and services of TLRC partners (LGUs, TLDCs) and Assisted projects (entrepreneurs, NGOs and SMEs); Livelihood technologies demonstrations

DAY 2
February 19, 2002 • 5:00 p.m
Megatrade Hall 1, Building B, SM Megamall

Recognition Awards: A tribute to Micro-Entrepreneurs

Highlights: Presentation of Awards to 12 outstanding individual entrepreneurs assisted by TLRC's Livelihood Funds Assistance Group through its Kalahi, Special Direct Micro-Lending, Kakayahan and ULFD/BSK programs; presentation of awards to nine (9) cooperatives/NGOs assisted by the Center's other funding programs: Technology Funds Assistance Group, Strategic Livelihood and Technology Development group, and project team Bulkan

DAY 3
February 20, 2002 • 5:30 p.m.
Megatrade Hall 1, Bldg. B, SM Megamall

TLRC Silver Anniversary Grand SME Awards Night

Highlights: Presentation of Awards to Outstanding SMEs assisted by TLRC

DAY 4
February 21, 2002 • 5:30 p.m.
Megatrade Hall 1, Building B, SM Megamall

Exhibitor"s Night

Highlights: Presentation of Awards to the TLRC Trade Fair 2002 Outstanding Booth, Products, etc., and Presentation of Certificates of Participation to the Trade Fair participants; Cultural numbers from Laguna province and La Union province exhibitors

DAY 5
February 22, 2002 • 5:00 p.m.
Megatrade Hall 1, Building B, SM Megamall

LGU-TLDC Lingkod Bayan Awards Night

Highlights: Presentation Awards to Most Active TLDCs (Technology and Livelihood Development Centers) from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; and to Best TLDC products at the Trade Fair, Presentation of Plaques of Appreciation to TLRC's TLDC Partners; Cultural Numbers from Bicol and Mindanao participants.

DAY 6
February 23, 2002 • 4:00 p.m.
Armed Forces of the Philippines Officers' Club
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

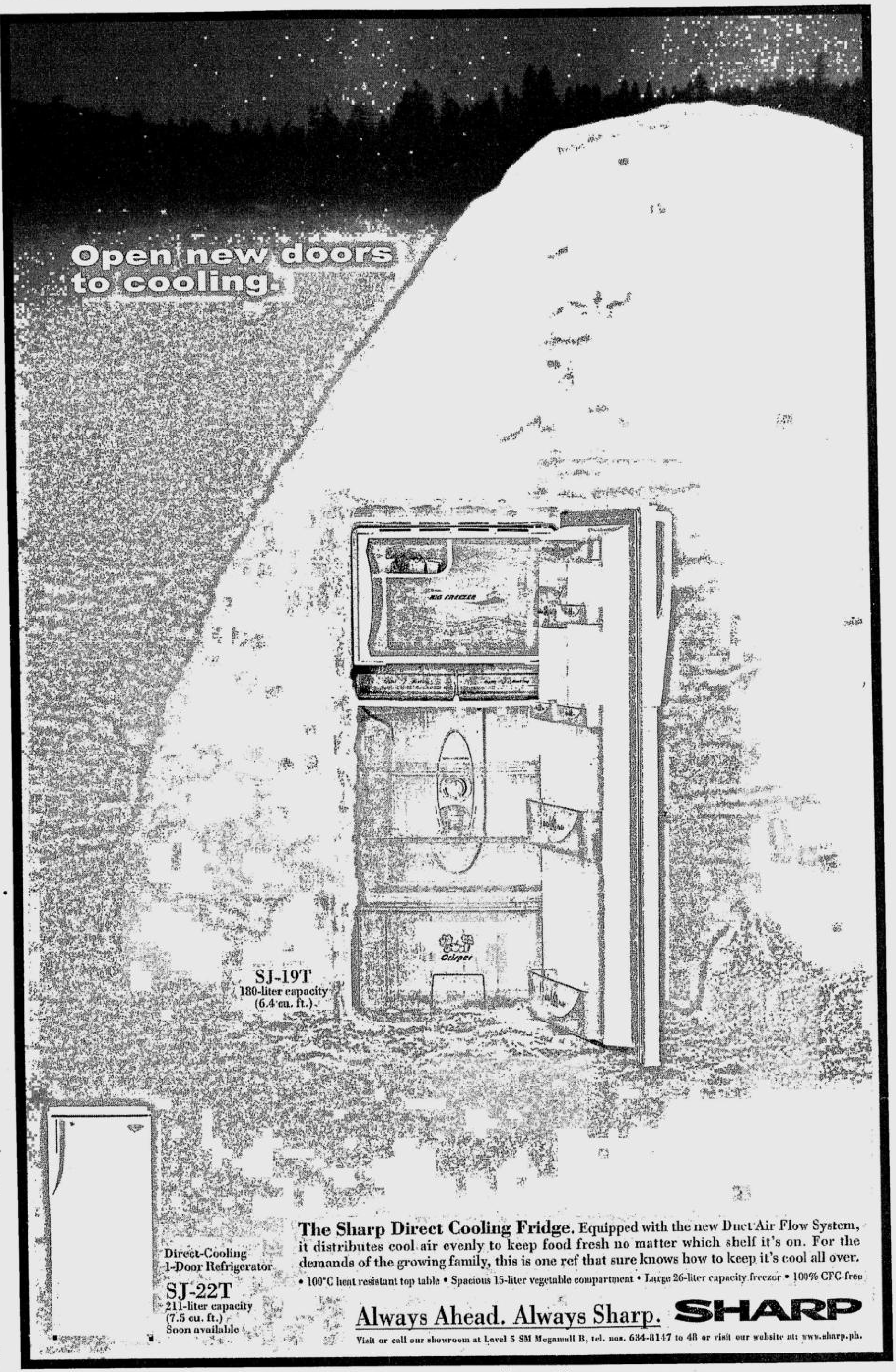
Anniversary Program/Dinner and Launching of the TLRC Impact Projects

Highlights: Conferment of Loyalty Awards to employees who have served the Center continuously for 25, 20 and 10 years; cultural numbers from talented TLRC employees and the TLRC Chorale

DAY 7 - February 24, 2002

Closing of the TLRC Trade Fair 2002

Note: Detailed programs will be distributed on or shortly before the events.



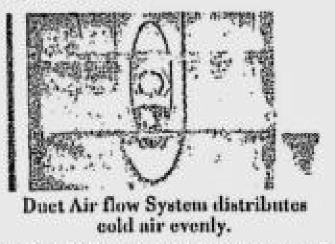
The Sharp Direct Cooling Fridge. Equipped with the new Duct Air Flow System, it distributes cool air evenly to keep food fresh no matter which shelf it's on. For the demands of the growing family, this is one ref that sure knows how to keep it's cool all over.

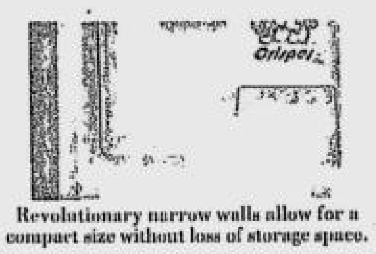
• 100°C heat resistant top table • Spacious 15-liter vegetable compartment • Large 26-liter capacity freezer • 100% CFC-free

Always Ahead. Always Sharp. SHARP

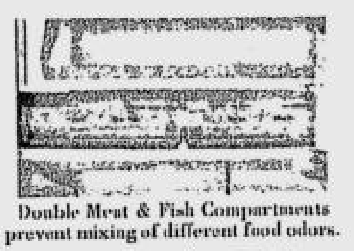
Visit or call our showroom at Level 5 SM Megamall B, tel. nos. 634-8147 to 48 or visit our website at: www.sharp.ph.

Innovative features:


Duct Air flow System distributes cold air evenly.



Revolutionary narrow walls allow for a compact size without loss of storage space.


Double Meat & Fish Compartments prevent mixing of different food odors.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
Republic of the Philippines

TECHNOLOGY and LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
The Power of Knowledge

TLRC pays tribute to its partners in progress. We're proud of being part of their success.

With every year, the list grows on...

• 3D (Duty, Dignity & Determination) MPC • 4 J's Piggery Farm • 5 R's Furniture • 7D Food International • 9 Jewels • A & L Fishpond & Hatchery • A & R Interiors • Bylsons, Inc. • Catangi Industries, Inc. • A.E. Cipriano • A.T. Martin • AA Ceramics • ABC Minerals Industrial Corp. • Abenter Seafarms, Inc. • Abigail's Handcrafted Furniture • ABM Poultry Farm I • Abra Provincial Government • Abra Enterprises • ACB Ventures • Accent Pieces • ACCORD MPC • Accra Law Office • ACTION MPC • ADA International Phils., Inc. • Addenda Ice Plant • Adelina Minimart • Adlin Manufacturing • AEB Biotechnology • AEO Int'l Food Corp. • AFC Agribusiness Corp. • AFI Int'l Trading Corp • AFP-Camp Aguinaldo • AFP-Public Affairs • AG Garments • Agar International, Inc. • Agoo, La Union • Agrevo Philippines Corporation • Agri-Best Unlimited, Inc. • Agriwaste Feed Furnace/Dryer • Agriwaste Fueled Rice Dryer • Aguas, Ocar (FAHRI/F-1) • Aguilar Mini Livestock Farm • Agusan del Norte • Al Tripon Company, Inc. • Ailyn's Garments • AJ Manufacturing • Ajee Marketing, Inc. • Ajlknani Garments • Akka Wood, Inc. • Aklan Provincial Government • Al Khariya MPC • Al Rahman Islamic Assn., Inc. • Alabat Sealand MPC • Alay sa Kapatid International Foundation • Albastar MPC • Albay Market Vendors MPC • Alenser Cane • ALEX III (Acctg.) • ALEX III (Payroll) • All of a Kind Trading • Allandale Sportsline • Alliance of Muslim, Christian & Cultural Minorities • Allied Retreaders & Sales Ent., Inc. • Almario, Artemio (FCGA/Poultry) • Almatech Needlecraft • Alpa Sunrise Apparel • Alsha Business Enterprise • Alvaro, Orlando (FAHRI/F-1) • AM Offset and Packaging • AM Printing • AMEX Trading • Anniphil HenTaculce • AMO Phils., Inc. • Ampersand Corp. • Anak Pawis II MPC • Andanar, Inc. • Andong's Poultry Farm • Andres Calceta Garments • Ang Likha Woodcraft • Angcos Garments Mfg. • Angeles Pinatubo New Settlement HOA • Angelic Babywear Corp. • Angeliglass Prod Specialties • Angmaya Coco Resources, Inc. • Ann Garments • Anna Ria's Shoes & Handbags • Anna Genetics, Inc. • Antique Provincial Government • Antonio Bryan • Anton's Duck Farm • Applied Agrosystems • Apung Duman Builder and Welding Shop • Apung Monica de Minalin • Aqua Piggery • Aqua Solar Trading Corp. • Aqua Tierra Resources & Development • Arabia Bebe – Anac, MPCI • Aranaar Multi-Purpose Cooperative • Arañas Agri Food Corp. • Arañez Agri-Foods Corporation • Arazo Manufacturing Co. • ARCDP-Isabela • Arceo, Cornelio (PORAC/DR) • Archipelago Rattan • Ardie Motors and Metalworks • Aref Metal Works • Arefe-Ugma Corp. • Arte Ceramica • Arte Garments • Arteche MPC • Artha Corporation • Artugues Canteen • A's Garments • ASB Agricultural Dev. Corp. • Ascomo MPCI • ASG Craft Ent. Inc. • Asia Ceramics Corporation • Asia Dynamic Elektrix Corp. • Asia Rattan Mfg. 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Inc. • Balikatan sa Kabuhayan • Balikatan Savings & Loans Coop. • Balikatang Balik Lupa • Balik-Loob, MPCI • Balling Agri-based MPC • Ballcraft Industries • Bamangca Irrigators Assn., Inc. • Bamban Jeepney Drivers Assn. • Bamban Pinatubo HOA • Banana Flour/Manalo Santos • Bangar Women's Mkt. Vendors Credit Coop. • Bangles Trading • Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas • Bangkoaranao • Bangsamoro MPC • Bannawag MPCI • Bannuar RIC MPC • Bantug Mini Rice Thresher • Barangay Cutcut MPCI • Barsani • Basa Farms & Agro-Indl Corp. • Basilan Parrahalayakan Integrated Devt. Cooperative • Batanes, Prov'l. Government Employees • Batangas Agri-Bus. Ctr., Inc. • Batch '74 Credit Cooperative • Bato Municipal Government • Batolini S., Inc. • Baugan MPC • Bavaris Foods • Baylon • Bayspice Corp. • Baytan Industries • Baytown Aquaculture, Inc. • BB Handicrafts • BBQ Griller • BDC (Billing & Collection) • BDC Industrial & Allied Services • Ben John Trading • Benito O. Samia Mem. Fdn. • Benito Soliven, Isabela • Bergesen D.Y. Phils. Inc. • Betis Crafts, Inc. • Betson's Industries • Betson's Industries Corp. • Better Life Beyond 2000 MPC • Bgy. Pabalag Livelihood Business Center • Bgy. San Roque Business Center • Bicol University • Big Bite Barquillos • Bignay Credit Cooperative • Bilud Primary Multi-Purpose Cooperative • Binanuahan RIC MPC • Bing Dizon Giftline • Binhi ng Otsenta, Inc. • Bio-Research • BIR TRU Encoding • BISA MPCI • Blue Jay Garments • Board of Investments • Bohol Provincial Government • Borongan I BHW Consumers Coop. • Botolan LGU • Brgy. Matiyaga MPC • Brgy. Pitogo (Councilman Quiambao) • Briad Agro Dev't Corp. • Brillo Handicrafts • Brineless Portable Ice Plant • Bristol-Myers Phils. Inc. • Bro Belt Machine Shop • Brown Madonna Press, Inc. • Brown Sugar Enterprises • Buan, Irmina (FAHRI/H-1) • Bukas MPCI • Bukidnon Rubber • Buklod Pagkakaisa ng Mt. Pinatubo Victims • Bulacan Balut Industry • Bulacan State University • Bulalo Hanwoven Fabric Assn • Bulan Women's Assn. For Progress, Inc. • Bulaon Settlement HOA • Buliganay MPC • Buranuan Satellite Market Vendors Assn. • Bureau of Animal Industry • Bureau of Corrections • Bureau of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources • Bureau of Food & Drug • Bureau of Internal Revenue • Bureau of Jail Management and Penology • Bureau of Mines & Geosciences • Bureau of Plant Industry • Burgos, Pangasinan • Business Center Davao, Inc. • Butuan Road Agro-Industrial Dev. Farm • C & E Packaging • C & L Farms • Rosal Farms • Cabu MPCI • Cagayan Valley General Marketing • Calapan Balita MPC • Calatrava Municipal Government • Calbayog City Government • Calbayog City MIS Project • Callum Manufacturing Co. • California Mfg. Corp. Supervisors Union • Caltex Philippines, Inc. • Calumpit TODA MPC • CAM Garments Manufacturing • Camarines Sur Provincial Government • Camiguin • Camp John Hay – Fil Estate • Cancio Associates • Candaba Livelihood Assn. • Candaba Market Vendors (CAMVECO0 • Capiz Provincial Government • Capulong, Eduardo (FAHRI/H-1) • Capulong, Homer (FAHRI/F-1) • Carbonizer Dryer • Career Executive Service Board • Caritas Limay Foundation • Carl Duisberg Association of the Philippines • Carlito Dogwe Tricycle Service • Carlos Antonio Desenos • Carlos Disenos, Inc. • Carlos Trading • Carlos, Antonio (FAHRI/H-1) • Carlos, Eufrocino (PORAC/VB) • Carmasor (Davao) Agr'l Inc. • Carmel Import-Export Corp. • Carmen Fish Dealer • Carmen Livestock Farm • Carmi RTW • Cartridge Battery • Castalloy Technology Corp. • Castillejos Market Vendors MPCI • Castillejos New Settlers HOA • CATAG-Virac, Catanduanes • Cataingan Fishery MPC • Catamaran Passenger Ferry • Catanauan Marine Corp. • Catanauan MPC • Cathay Pacific Multi-Comm. • Catmon Multi-Purpose Cooperative • Cavite Provincial Government • Cavite State University • Cayanan Delicacies • CDF-Cong. James Gordon • CDF-Cong. Joel Altario • CDF-Cong Maranon • CDF-Gov. Eric Singson • CDF-Sen. Sergio Osmena • Cebu City Government • Cebu Legacy • Cecil's Garments • Celebes Canning Corp. • Center for International Expositions and Missions • Center for Rural-Oriented Policy Programs & Services (CROPPS) • Central Azucarera de Tarlac • Central Luzon State University • Century Worldwide Exports • Chairtraders International • Charcoal Briquette/Joel Mangalindan • Charcoal Briquette/Felix Matunguena • Charfel Garments • Charis Foundation • Charies Foods • Chi Epsilon Food Industries • Chico Computer • Children's Treasure, Inc. • Chit's Garments • Christal Furnicraft • Christ the King Development Program • Christian Garments • Christian MPC • Christians Multi-Resources Producers Coop. • CIAC • CIAP • Citizens Agro Industrial • City Government of Bago • City Government of Lucena • City Government of Naga • City Government of Palayan • City Government of San Fernando • City Government of Tangub • City Government of Makati • City Government of Tagaytay • Claire RTW & Dress Shop • Clarson Enterprises • Clean and Green Foundation • Clear Export • Clothespak Mfg. • Clothman Knitting • Coal-Fired Calcining Kiln • Cobe International Corp. • Coco-Charcoal Briquetting/Romulo Mesias • Coconut Decorating Machine • Cocoon Proc'g machine & Eqpt. • Colgate-Palmolive Phils. 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Inc. • Housing & Urban Development Corporation • Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board • HSHS Livelihood MPC • Hybrid Silkworm & Egg Multiplier/BS-R1 • I.L. David Poultry & Livestock • Ibingay MPC • ICLARM • Ifugao Provincial Government • Ifugao, Palayan • IGC Garments • Ilang Ilang Corp. • Iligan City • Ilocos Norte Development Program • Ilocos Sur • Improved Ball-Joint Project • Imprenta Makati • Indanan, Sulu • Indang Trading • Infante Fishpond • Inocala Prodn' & BOF Project • Inscot Agro-Industries • Institute of International Education • Insular Rattan & Native Product • Integrated Barangay Coop., Inc. • Intel Technology • Interglobe MPC • International Center for Living Aquatic Resource Management, Inc. • International Coordinating & Advisory Group • International Milling Company • International Wiring System • Intertool Precision • Ionics Circuits • Iriga City Government • Isabela, Basilan • Islamic Bank • Island Cuisine, Inc. • Italian Cooperation • ITC Food Products • Izumi Garments • J & J Duck Farm • J & J Machine Shop • J. B Woodcraft • J.D Santos Furnicraft • J. 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P6T Hse/Bldg/Whse/Interior Ofc/Factor/Shop •728-2605•

CONSTRUCTION/ DESIGN

BLDG HOUSE CONST. REPAIR RENOV ROOF PAINT 7408490

P7T/M² SWIMMING POOL 7282605 P4TLAND SURVEY 8819158

Swimming Pool 7000/m² Billboard/Truss •640-9192•

COSMETOLOGY

FACIAL SKINCARE
Training/ Workshop
8956031 L2011 OR 8971832

ENGINEERS

Hse Cons./Renov. •640-9192•

MASSAGE

AKHIN THAI MASSAGE#0917 4116004 #5105011#4585261

'ATTA MEN 5758077

BANAUE SPA M&F 7411426

BOYZ 2DMX 8348875

H-H-MS MALE 7314018

JAMES MALE 24HRS SERVICE 8511883 ; 0916-4404374

MALE 16 PALANAN 7320659

MASSAGE FRED 8513462

•New Mabuhay Massage• Valentine Promo 4215996

PRETTY MASSEUR 7898201

UNWIND 752-0437

VIP-M/F-24H-SVC 8312373 Romy

Young MASSEUR 0919-2569795

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Edward Reflex 7289285

REFLEX CARLA 716-4898

Scorpion Massg 4372542

Wizard Massage 4213197

TUTORIAL LESSONS

English 09163474010

• LIGHT-5268216 OR 70 •

HOUSEHOLD

FLOOR SANDING

JL Flr Sand serv 4102824

HOUSEHOLD JOBS

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Avble hardworking maids Call 4450513 or 2914524

BEST MAIDS 912-4701•9124706

BestMaids4111593/7419082

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Direct Maid Yaya Boy 7570579

Good-Maid-Yaya-Boy 7570579

Help Agency 532-1947 • 532-8376

LOW RATE AGENCY 9288862

MAIDS•2594067•2590869

NURSE•Midwife•Oldsitter•Yaya 8720265•7722353•8712372

Prov'l MAID YAYA COOK LABA BOY DRIVER 873-5062•873-7055

RELIABLE HONEST MAIDS
W/ NBI 4213253

Yaya Maid Cook Laba 8533505

Yaya Maid Cook Laba 8429807

Yaya Maid Cook 8708799

LIPAT BAHAY

L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

A-1 LIPAT BAHAY 4313975

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

HOUSEHOLD

LIPAT BAHAY

•CHEAP LBAHAY 9260424•

CLOSE VAN 7327808 4/6W

LBAHAY 7113540

L-BAHAY 712-16-92

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LIPAT MM / PROVL•4342613•

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Rushl Calumpang LA 293 2BR+1TB 0917-5282174

MUNTINLUPA

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RIZAL

Bentley Park Subd LA108 FA100 3br2tb 09178174547

SAN JUAN

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Ghills East 900 SPool P40M; North 960 P35M • 723-2391

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VARIOUS AREAS

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L624 SFDM 2sty whse
L714 Congresional Ave QC
L406 ProjB Short Horn QC
L2000 Baler St. QC whse
L280 Apo st SMH T9281469

LOT

KALOOCAN

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

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VISTA VERDE EXEC VILLAGE LA319m² P1.3M Vic/Gigie 8903461 loc. 27/25

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MAKATI

SANLO DUPLEX 5268048

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MANDALUYONG

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Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
TOLL REGULATORY BOARD
2/F Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Building
Doña Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. Nos. 631-4673, 631-4749, 631-5025, 631-5901
Fax No. 631-6034; Email: trbexdir@pacific.net.ph

NOTICE OF PRE-HEARING CONFERENCE

In connection with TOLL RATE ADJUSTMENTS recently promulgated by the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) for the Metro Manila Skyway Project which was constructed by Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corporation (CMMTC) and which is being operated by the PNCC through the PNCC Skyway Corporation, its fully-owned subsidiary, NOTICE is hereby given that the TRB shall conduct a Pre-hearing Conference between the parties (Oppositors to the toll rate adjustments and CMMTC) together with their attorneys and the Hearing Officer on **February 19, 2002**, 2:00 p.m., at the Conference Room of the TRB, 2nd Floor, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Building, Doña Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, for the purpose of seeking agreement on ways or means of expediting the proceedings of the Formal Hearings.

Any interested expressway user has the right to file a petition with the Toll Regulatory Board for a review of the provisional toll rates. The **February 19, 2002** Pre-Hearing Conference shall include all petitions for review submitted on or before **February 18, 2002.** All petitions for review of the provisional toll rates submitted between **February 18, 2002** and **March 17, 2002** (90th day from first publication of Notice of Toll Rate Adjustment) will be included in a subsequent Pre-Hearing Conference.

Copies of the Rules of Practice and Procedure Governing Hearing before the Toll Regulatory Board may be secured from the Office of the Executive Director in the same office address stated above.

(Sgd.) **JAIME S. DUMLAO, JR.**
Executive Director

(PDI – Feb. 14 & 18, 2002)

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **MR. ERNESTO B. DIMASANGAL**, whose picture appears above, ceased to be connected with our company, effective **29 January 2002.**

All persons who, and companies and entities, that have transactions with him should personally coordinate with us in the address and telephone numbers written below. The Company shall not honor transactions with him subsequent to the aforementioned date.

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW.

FABRIANO
ADMI
CYA
103 Mercedes Ave.,
Brgy. San Miguel, Pasig City
Tel. No. 643-3456

(PDI - Feb. 18, 2002)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
DISBURSEMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY FOR ACCREDITATION

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested service providers to Pre-qualify for accreditation for the supply of the temporary need of the Bank for the following manpower services:

a) Engineers (Electrical and Civil/Sanitary)
b) Architect

For prequalification and accreditation purposes, prospective contractors must meet the following criteria/requirements:

1) Must have been in the business of supplying/providing manpower services on a contractual basis for at least two (2) years;
2) Must have a minimum working capital of P500,000.00 and networth of P1.0 Million; and
3) Must be able to submit pertinent documents relative to the establishment of the business, such as, but not limited to the following documents (original of Nos. 1 and 2 to be presented for authentication purposes):
   a) Articles of Incorporation/SEC/DTI Registration papers;
   b) Year 2000 Audited Financial Statement (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) and Year 2000 Income Tax Return;
   c) Company History/Profile
   d) Business/Mayors Permit/License;
   e) copies of contracts for the past two (2) years;
   f) List of satisfied customers/clients for the past two (2) years indicating the contact person(s) and telephone/fax numbers; and
   g) Other pertinent documents

Only those who submit/comply with the above requirements and are prequalified and accredited by the Bank will be invited to participate in the actual bidding which will be conducted on a later date to be advised to the prequalified suppliers. All documentary requirements must be submitted not later than **February 28, 2002** to the Manager I, Procurement Division III, Administrative Services Department, Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, Tel. Nos. 523-13-21.

The two-envelope system shall be adopted in the bidding.

The BSP hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as to waive any defect or informality in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

FOR THE DISBURSEMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE:

(Sgd.) EDUARDO L. MAGAHIS
Officer-In-Charge
Administrative Services Department

(PDI--Feb. 18, 2002)

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"Absent with the body to be present with the Lord"
2 Corinthians 5:8

ATTY. MOISES L. SALONGA, SR.

Peacefully returned to his Creator
September 4, 1919 - February 14, 2002

His bereaved children **Fr. Memeng**, **Tina** and **Jimmy Bustos**, **Carol** and **Philip Adao**, **Cora** & **Willie Atienza**, **Carms** & **Jim Sanchez** and **Cynthia** and **Greg Pizarro**; daughter-in-law **Marlyn Salonga**; grandchildren **Joy**, **Marmoi**, **Bajim**, **Janina**, **Moity**, **Paul**, **Gelo**, **J.J.**, **F. John**, **Camille**, **Francis** and **Therese** request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His family in heaven **Natividad Meneses** and **Moises Salonga Jr.**, **Victorino** and **Pelagia Salonga**, **Pedro** and **Jesus Salonga** welcome him home.

His remains lie in St. Joseph and Holy Family Chapel, Mt. Carmel Shrine Parish, Doña Juana Rodriguez Avenue (Broadway), New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 21, 2002. The funeral procession will leave for Bambang, Bulacan, Bulacan at 12 noon and the Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at 3:00 p.m., at San Isidro Labrador Parish Church.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

General Elias G. Lavadia

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 16, 2002 at the age of 83.

His beloved wife **Amada Cruz Lavadia**; children **Sylvia** & **Jimmy Javier**, **Tocy** & **Wayne Friend**, and **Ramon**; grandson **Jonathan**; other relatives and dear friends mourn his passing, and wish his eternal rest.

His body lies in state at the Del Virgin Chapel at the Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 21, 2002 at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Sanctuario de San Antonio Church.

"My soul finds rest to God alone; from Him comes my salvation."
Psalm 62:2

Our Dearly Beloved Mama

LOURDES CADIZ ABOY

1930 - 2002

Now peacefully rest in peace in the infinite Grace and Goodness of the Lord
on the 16th day of February 2002 at the age of 72.

Her loving husband **Primitivo**; children & children-in-law **Antonio** & **Terry**, **Manny** & **Ging**, **Jun** & **Liza**, **Alden** & **Jacque**; grandchildren **Ja^2**, **Jay^2**, **Abigail**, **Oliver**, **Philip**, **Jun^2**, **Aj**, **James**, **Jullyanna**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati City, Chapel Q.

Interment will be on Wednesday, February 20, 2002 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS •
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DR. HERMENEGILDO G. CARIÑO

Retired Colonel, PAF

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 16, 2002
at the age of 93.

His beloved children **Mike** and **Jean**, **Evie** and **Raul**, **Toti** and **Norma**, **Utchie** and **Jorge**; grandchildren **Arnie** and **Mariska**, **Nina** and **Philip**, **Sonny**, **Carlo**, **Peewee**, **Francis**, **Ria**, **Mikee**, **Rissa**; great grandchildren **Miggy**, **Lexi** and **Raffy**; other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Don Bosco Chapel,
A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City.

Memorial Mass to be held on Wednesday, February 20, 2002 at 1:00 p.m. at the St. Polycarp Church, Cabuyao, Laguna.

Interment follows at the Cabuyao Municipal Cemetery.

CECILIO LORETO DIZON

Of Bagac, Bataan

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 16, 2002 at the age of 77.

His bereaved wife **LUCIANA DIZON** (nee **CONCEPCION**); children **AGNES & RICARDO DELOS REYES**, **NIEVA** (nee **DIJAMCO**) & **OSCAR BOLAÑOS**; grandchildren **ARVIN**, **CARLO & BEA DELOS REYES**, **VINCENT**, **LORENZ & IVAN BOLAÑOS**; sisters **LEONORA & REYNALDO MENDOZA**, **ESTELITA**; brothers **RICARDO** (†) & **ALICIA** (nee **SANTIAGO**) (†) **DIZON**, **RODOLFO & CARIDAD** (nee **DE GUIA**) **DIZON**; nephews, nieces and grandchildren **ALLAN**, **BOBBY ADETTE & CHIN-CHIN** (†) **DIZON** and **JAY MENDOZA**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 21, 2002 at the La Loma Cemetery, Caloocan City, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Solace 2 Chapel.

ANTONINA R. STA. MARIA

March 13, 1933 - February 16, 2002

Her children **LEOPOLDO**, **HILARIO**, **JESUS JR.** & **MARY ANN**, **JESSELTON** & **JOY**, **MARIFE** & **JERRY**; Grandchildren **LIZA**, **LEO** & **OMAN**, **JAYVEE** & **JAYPEE**, **MARC JERARD** and **ANGELO**, request the pious readers to say a little pray for the repose of her soul.

The body lies in state at St. Joseph of Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be at Heavenly Peace Memorial Garden at Molino, Bacoor, Cavite City (Date of interment to be announced later.)

For further details, please contact tel..No. 825-3082 to 83 loc. 109 or Cell # 0917-256-5159.

People, Events & Products

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Aries Espinosa, Editor

Ramon Aboitiz Foundation accepts nominations for awards

THE RAMON Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (Rafi) is now accepting nominations for individuals and institutions who promote quality living by answering the call for community service and development.

In the 2nd Rafi Triennial Awards in Visayas and Mindanao, awards will be given in two categories, namely The Ramon Aboitiz Award for Exemplary Individual and the Eduardo Aboitiz Award for Outstanding Institution.

The individual award was named after Don Ramon Aboitiz, Rafi founder, for the example he set in his efforts to help persons realize their hopes by sharing with them the burden of their fears. The institutional award was named after Don Eduardo Aboitiz, his son, who expanded his father's traditional philanthropic activities by strengthening and developing the foundation into a democracy-based and people-centered organization.

Individuals and institutions nominated for the awards will undergo an extensive screening process. The search committee, composed of five representatives from the academe, business group and civil society, will select the final list of nominees to be evaluated through a series of field validations.

Heading the committee is Edgar Comeros, who was also a member of the last award's search committee. He is the executive director of the biggest non-government cooperative federation in the Visayas Center for Training and Development (Victo). Other committee members are Ma. Theresa Mendoza-Rivera, a native of Cagayan de Oro and an expert on development communications; Marides Virola-Gardiola, a trainer and coordinator for the peace and development program of the Community Organizers Multiversity in Mindanao; Martiniana D. Mercado, a finalist in the individual category from the previous award and executive director of the Albert Schweitzer Familienwerk Foundation Philippines Inc., and Bernardo Liu, multi-awarded president of Penshoppe.

The first search yielded over a hundred nominations from where Dr. Warlito Laquihon for the Sloping Agricultural Land Technologies (SALT) he developed garnered the Exemplary Individual award. Recognized as the Outstanding Institution was the Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LMPC) from Barangay Lamac, Pinamungajan, Cebu.

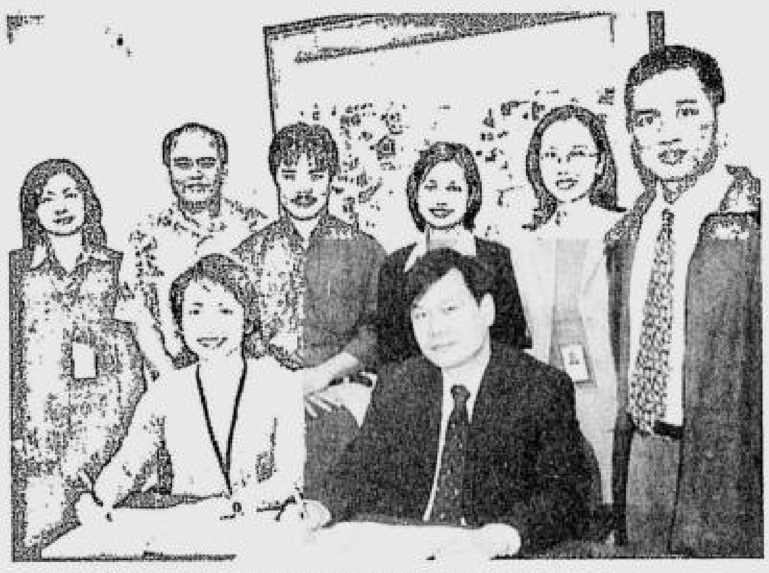
Each award category will be given a trophy, a cash prize of P250,000 and an opportunity to travel in the Visayas and Mindanao to share the awardee's expertise to various groups. The awards will be conferred on March 8, 2003.

Deadline for submission of nominations is on March 31. For more information, call (032)255-5626/7 or 255-5646 and look for either Vicky Villamor or Tanny Mobe, or log on to www.rafi.org.ph/trienn

Doing our share in saving the environment.
SEN. LOREN LEGARDA-LEVISTE
Chairperson

EARTH+STYLE SPONSORS ENVIRONMENT EVENT

Senator Loren Legarda-Leviste presents a memento to (from left) Earth+Style Corp.'s chief operating officer Jacinto C. Ng, Jr., president-CEO Victor H. Manarang and AVP-corporate communications/My Home magazine publisher Joy Basilio-Madlansacay. Earth+Style sponsored Luntiang Pilipinas' 'Pagdiriwang ng Kalikasan' at Biñan, Laguna recently.



SUN LIFE FINANCIAL CRM PARTNER

With genuine customer satisfaction in mind, Sun Life Financial enlists Price Waterhouse Coopers' assistance for its Customer Relationship Management Project. Sun Life Financial vice president for individual operations Riza Mantaring and Price Waterhouse Coopers partner Joseph Wong ink the deal. Also present for the signing are (from right) Sun Life financial management services director Richard Lim, consultant Ma. Angelina Albert, business project manager Sherry Borja, wealth accumulations and sales systems manager Exequiel Golez, systems project officer Peter Galido, and Price Waterhouse Coopers project manager Charina Palma.

NFHFI holds 11th national confab

THE National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. (NFHFI) will hold its 11th National Convention of Hog Farmers from May 23 to 25. This was announced by national chair Nemesio G. Co.

The venue of the 3-day convention will be the Megatrade Hall at the 5th level of the SM Megamall in Edsa. The trade exhibits will showcase the products and services of partners and patrons of hog farmers such as veterinary drug companies, veterinary swine practitioners and nutritionists and swine breeders.

Delegates from the various member-associations of the NFHFI will be treated to sports events before the opening of the convention. Golf and tennis tournaments have been organized. Seminars on the latest trends in swine raising are also on the list of activities.

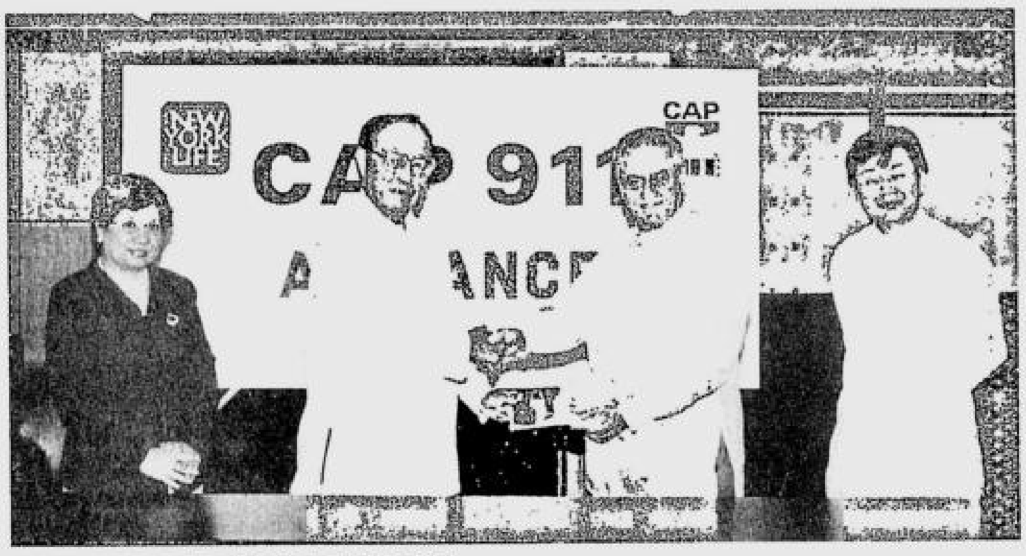
Co has appointed senior vice president Albert R.T. Lim, Jr. as convention chair, Manuel J. LaO as vice chair, lawyer Lauareano L. Abesamis, convention secretary, Vincent U. Tiu, convention treasurer and Antonio C. Tomlin convention auditor.

Other committee chairpersons are Belen B. Chavez, food and drinks; Eliseo S. Yu, exhibits and booths; Minton L. Quan, sports; Reynaldo J. Macaraig and Virgilio T. Ang, transportation; Romeo A. Alzona, Jr., program; Rodolfo C. Custodio, venue/physical arrangement; Joel F. Ramos, seminars/program; Esteban G. Oñate, hotel accommodations and Victorio S. Lo and Benjamin O. Ontal, awards.

The NFHFI is the umbrella organization of hog farmers associations in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Since 1990, the NFHFI has held its national conventions in various places such as Antipolo in Rizal, Kawit in Cavite, Cebu City, General Santos City, Iloilo City, Davao City and Bacolod City.

A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS

It's definitely a pleasure to do business for the sales and marketing team of the Montemar Beach Club Inc. in Bagac, Bataan. With the Club's 500-meter stretch of white beach as their backdrop, there's no stopping this young and dynamic team from doing business with a smile and bringing in corporate, embassy, travel accounts and FIT guests to the Club. Shown are team members (from left) Ana O. Nojadera, member relations staff; Paolo Y. Delgado, senior account executive; Christine Urbanozo-Ibarreta, sales and marketing manager; Farrah A. Yanga, account executive; and Christine R. Reyes, reservations officer.



CAP 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

A business partnership between CAPLife Insurance Corp. and New York Life Insurance Companies Inc. was recently created after the two companies held official talks to formalize the creation of a new product, designed exclusively for associates and friends of the CAP Family of Companies. Known as the CAP 911, the new product aims to provide financial protection to families against untoward incidents and emergencies through an affordable yet comprehensive life insurance program. The event ended with CAP president and CEO lawyer Enrique A. Sobrepeña, Jr. (second from left) shaking hands with New York Life Philippines president and CEO Dr. George May after further discussions on several mutually agreed upon details. Also present during the talks were Marianne Crisol, New York Life Philippines vice president and COO, and New York Life senior vice president and CFO Saloon Tham.

TOURISM AUTHOR OUTSTANDING PROFESSOR

Dr. Zenaida L. Cruz, author of tourism textbooks, founding president of the Tourism Educators of Schools, Colleges and Universities and tourism professor at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, received the Golden Dove Achievement Award as Outstanding Professor of 2001 given by the Achievers Magazine at the Bay View Park Hotel recently. To her left is Cecilia G. Alvarez, the award presenter.

J-Lo gets tough in 'Angel Eyes' on video

FROM the director of "When a Man Loves a Woman" Luis Mandoki comes a compelling love story between two unlikely couples that cross paths under life-threatening circumstances in the hit film starring hot Hollywood singer-actress Jennifer Lopez. "Angel Eyes" is now released on original VHS and VCD format by C-Interactive Digital Entertainment "The Video to C."

In the story, J-Lo plays tough Chicago cop Sharon Pogue who gives no quarter to the criminals on her beat. She's ready to beat up any lowlife who treats her disrespectfully. On the other hand, Catch has his own trauma to deal with. He's a drifter, seemingly connected to nothing and no one. But all these things change when he spots Sharon at a coffee shop rushing headlong into a potentially fatal situation. Catch is just in time to save her. Sharon becomes intrigued by the man's quiet, mysterious personality. They begin to take tentative steps toward a relationship. She discovers Catch has been dealing with a tragic past, and in his efforts to escape pain, he loses everything—including his identity.

Co-starring Jim Caviezel of "The Thin Red Line" as Catch, "Angel Eyes" on video is available at your favorite outlets nationwide. For inquiries, call the customer care hotline 245-5011-12 (Manila), (032)412-1948 (Cebu) and (082)221-0405 (Davao).

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(Sgd.) **AVP ANTONETTE L. FERNANDEZ**
Vice-Chairperson

(PDI--Feb. 18, 2002)

TSPI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
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COCOLIFE, TSPI FOR MICRO-INSURANCE

Cocolife and Tulong sa Pag-unlad Inc. Development Corp. (TSPI) forged a partnership in a micro-insurance program for Damayan sa Kabuhayan, a livelihood program for individual and community members of TSPI. Cocolife will provide life insurance protection and medical benefits to TSPI members. Present during the recently concluded micro-insurance product launching were top executives of both institutions (from left) Elmo Nobleza, first vice president, group marketing division, Cocolife; Ruben de Lara, TSPI executive director; Dr. Olivia Pascual, TSPI treasurer; a TSPI member; lawyer Alfredo C. Tumacder Jr., president, Cocolife; Joycelyn Galang, assistant vice president, group marketing division, Cocolife and Amy de los Santos, TSPI director for field operations.

Spotting clean books amid accounting jitters

NEW YORK—Wall Street stock pickers this winter are taking steps to avoid the accounting flu.

The "bad numbers" disease that caused Enron Corp.'s dramatic collapse has spread to other companies with unexplained items on their profit statements and even the rumor of an accounting misstep can cause investors to go running for cover.

So money managers are dosing themselves with some old fashioned preventive medicine—working overtime looking at Corporate America's financial statements books to make sure they don't have hidden accounting problems.

"You have to be a detective," said Eric Jemetz, a senior equity analyst at New Amsterdam Partners, which oversees $1 billion. "On the surface, one company's not better than the next."

But Jemetz said it was important to dig deeper. "What you've got to have," he said, "is an understanding of what the company's track record has been."

Investors need to make sure that companies' expectations for growth are not totally out of whack with the amount of capital they have or can reasonably anticipate having. They should also make sure a company's growth is not dependent on propping up their already expensive stock prices so they can issue still more shares to fund operations, analysts said.

One of the most important things to keep an eye on, Wall Street money managers say, is a company's cash flow. Some firms may book a sale as revenue even if it has not yet been fully paid for, a tactic known as "stuffing the channel."

There are plenty of companies with questionable accounting, but most of Corporate America's cream of the crop are straightforward, money managers say.

"You can have very sophisticated folks whose job it is to pull the wool over a 25-year-old auditor's eyes, and they're going to be able to do that," said John Forelli, a portfolio manager at Independence Investments LLC, which oversees $20 billion. "But at the end of the day, you have to have confidence that what you're reading is true."

Companies with squeaky-clean accounting practices are gaining favor with investors; Forelli points to healthcare industry giant Johnson & Johnson as one company he thinks offers good disclosure of its divisions and product lines, as well as information about where product sales are coming from.

"They do a good job of giving earnings guidance and meeting earnings expectations, so that gives you confidence that they have good financial controls in place and they can anticipate their future earnings going forward," Forelli said.

Some analysts look for companies that offer clear, concise descriptions of a company's businesses rather than the corporate jargon that is often found in quarterly earnings statements and annual filings like the US Securities and Exchange Commission's 10K form.

One such firm is Costco Wholesale Corp., the largest US warehouse chain, said New Amsterdam's Jemetz, who also included diversified industrial group Danaher Corp. and Illinois Tool Works on his list.

Reuters

Global Crossing a major player

WASHINGTON—The United States' fourth largest bankruptcy has gotten scant attention in Washington because it occurred around the same time as the largest. But like Enron Corp., Global Crossing Ltd. was a major player in the capital.

The fiber optics and communications company made hefty campaign contributions, lobbied Congress aggressively and cultivated relationships with the politically influential.

The 5-year-old company, which filed for bankruptcy protection last month, first appeared as a major campaign contributor in 1999 and has made nearly $3.5 million in political donations since then, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, which studies money in politics. Enron and its executives gave $2.9 million in the same period.

Lobbyists have been paid more than $4 million, and Global Crossing's leaders have relationships with politicians in both parties, including two former presidents. Former Defense Secretary William Cohen sits on Global Crossing's board.

The company, based in Bermuda but run out of offices in California and New Jersey, has needed government approval for its undersea cables and its rapid acquisition of other telecommunications companies. The company also has won contracts with several agencies, foreign governments, even Nato.

"Telecommunications is a heavily regulated area," said Larry Makinson, the Center for Responsive Politics' executive director. "If you're trying to do new things in that area, you're going to need some green lights from the federal government to fulfill your business plan."

Global Crossing's campaign contributions have come in large chunks—unregulated soft money to both parties, favoring Democrats but not to the extent that Enron directed its money to Republicans.

Lawmakers on key committees have been a focus.

One of those panels, the House energy and commerce committee, has begun to examine Global's decline, said Ken Johnson, spokesperson for chair Billy Tauzin, R-La. Tauzin has received $2,000 from Global.

"We're in the very early stages of gathering information and facts," Johnson said. "We're not turning a deaf ear. But obviously, most of our resources are committed to the ongoing Enron investigation."

A second House committee may look at Global employees' retirement accounts, which were frozen as company stock took its last, steep plunge.

Even as Global's stock price was hovering just above $1 a share in December, the company's political action committee was giving $2,500 apiece to Democratic Senators Tom Harkin of Iowa and Carl Levin of Michigan and $500 to Rep. Robert Ehrlich, R-Md.

Those contributions capped a year in which Global gave campaigns more than $700,000, most of it in soft money. In late March, Global sent $100,000 in soft money to the National Republican Congressional Committee, the campaign organization for House Republicans. A week later, the Democrats' Senate campaign fund got $25,000. In June, Democrats received $75,000 while the GOP took in $110,000.

During the presidential campaign, George W. Bush received $68,950 in Global contributions.

What did Global Crossing expect for its money? Nothing, said Rebecca Yeamans, a company spokesperson. "We share a strong commitment to being corporate citizens and part of that is being part of the political process," Yeamans said.

No one in Congress has gotten more from the company than Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., formerly the chair and now the ranking Republican on the Senate Commerce Committee. McCain collected $31,000 from Global Crossing employees for his presidential campaign in March 1999. That same month, McCain, at the company's urging, asked the Federal Communications Commission (news - web sites) to encourage the development of undersea cables for transmitting telecommunications signals.

McCain did not respond to requests for an interview this week. The centerpiece of his presidential campaign—changing campaign finance law—passed the House this week, and its supporters said accounts of Enron's Washington largess helped sway wavering lawmakers.

The company's largest pay-out to a lobbyist was the $2.5 million it paid Anne Bingaman, a former antitrust official in the Clinton administration.

Bingaman, the wife of Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., said she dealt with the FCC and executive branch agencies on issues related to Global's core business: undersea fiber optic cables. "I did not make presentations to nor lobby any members of Congress or staff," she said.

Global paid Bingaman in cash and stock options, she said. When she sold most of her company stock in January 2000, she posted a profit of more than $1 million, according to her husband's financial disclosure report.

Global was bidding on a defense communications contract that was initially awarded to the company and then rescinded last year amid complaints from competitors that the company might lack the ability to provide secure and fast Internet services and, in any event, should be ineligible because it was based in Bermuda. Yeamans would not describe specific lobbying efforts, but Global hired a Washington law firm to lobby on defense issues. It also added Cohen to its board last year.

And Levin, who received the December campaign contribution, is chair of the Senate armed services committee.

AP

BG acquires Enron's assets in India

NEW DELHI, India—Britain's BG Group Plc. has completed its $350-million buyout of Enron Corp.'s oil and gas assets in India.

"Completion of this acquisition enables BG India to move ahead with its plans to become further involved in the country's energy industry and in India's growing natural gas sector," said Nigel Shaw, head of the company's Indian arm.

The acquired company will be renamed BG Exploration & Production India Ltd., Shaw said Friday. The acquisition does not include Enron's electricity generation business, the $2.9-billion Dabhol Power Co., which is also up for sale.

However, BG has yet to resolve its dispute with India's state-owned Oil & Natural Gas Corp., ONGC, over management of the offshore fields, where Enron had a stake.

BG signed the deal last year to acquire the upstream assets of cash-strapped Enron Corp., but failed to close the transaction due to a dispute with ONGC over management of the Panna, Mukta and Tapti oil and natural gas fields off India's western coast.

"Our director (operations) is currently in London to sort out the issue of operatorship with BG," E. Mohan Reddy, an ONGC spokesperson, told Dow Jones Newswires.

BG has bought Enron's 30-percent stake in these gas fields, while ONGC holds 40 percent. The remaining 30 percent is held by Reliance Industries Ltd., an Indian conglomerate.

BG already holds a 65-percent stake in Gujarat Gas Co. Ltd., developing a commercial and retail gas network in Gujarat state, and a 50-percent share of Mahanagar Gas Ltd., which is building a gas distribution business in Bombay.

AP

IBM chided for accounting on sale

NEW YORK—IBM Corp. used income from the sale of a business unit to lower its operating costs, giving its fourth quarter 2001 earnings report a rosier glow than it might otherwise have warranted.

The move boosted the company's operating income, which, IBM reported, narrowly beat Wall Street analysts' expectations. At other companies, such sales were often reported as a one-time gain that would not be reflected in operating income.

IBM defended its accounting of the $300-million sale, reported in Friday's editions of The New York Times, saying the company bought and sold businesses as a normal practice.

"This is not unusual treatment," said IBM spokesperson Carol Makovich. "We consider these items to be general expenses."

Makovich stressed that the sale of IBM's optical transceiver business to telecom equipment manufacturer JDS Uniphase Corp.—announced in a press release on Dec. 19—had been widely reported and was briefly mentioned in IBM's earnings conference on Jan. 17 by IBM chief financial officer John Joyce.

But in afternoon trading on the New York Stock Exchange, IBM shares were down nearly 4 percent, or $4.29 a share, at $103.60.

Financial and business analysts tended to defend IBM's reporting of the transaction, saying much of the proceeds were based on intellectual property developed by IBM researchers.

"Although the sale included some production equipment and a few people, the majority of the purchase price could be attributed to intellectual property that IBM developed through its research efforts," Merrill Lynch's Steven Milunovich wrote in an analyst report issued Friday.

"Our only concern would be that the company could have done more to call out the magnitude of the transaction," he wrote.

AP

Revlon president and CEO resigns

NEW YORK—Revlon Inc. announced Friday that Jeffrey Nugent, its president and chief executive who came on board two years ago to spearhead the cosmetic giant's turnaround, has resigned.

The announcement followed a report Friday in The Wall Street Journal that chair Ronald Perelman planned to replace Nugent with Jack Stahl, who left his position last year as president and chief operating officer at The Coca-Cola Co.

In the news release, Revlon, the maker of such products as Flex shampoo and Almay makeup, did not reveal who Nugent's successor would be, only stating it would name a replacement soon.

It noted that Nugent said, "he accomplished the strategic goals set for him two years ago when he joined the company, and he decided to seek new business opportunities."

During his tenure at Revlon, Nugent spearheaded a major cost-cutting effort, slashing general and administrative costs, consolidating manufacturing facilities and selling non-core assets. At the same time, the company developed new product lines such as skin toners that had Vitamin C.

Revlon also established new terms with its US retail partners, which offered incentives to reduce costly returns of merchandise.

But while Nugent was good at making the company more efficient, some people familiar with his work said he lacked a magic touch in revitalizing the brand.

The $1.5-billion cosmetics giant, which has been struggling with a string of losses and declining sales, continues to lose ground to competitors like Cover Girl, from Procter & Gamble, and has been stumbling in how to advertise its message to the consumer.

In 2000, Revlon parted ways with its spokesperson, model Cindy Crawford, as part of a new strategy to seek out non-celebrity models. However, that proved short-lived, and Revlon is now back to shoring up its celebrity lineup, which includes, most recently, fashion model James King.

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More flights to Middle East to check 'serious imbalance'

By Abigail L. Ho

THE MACAPAGAL administration's plan to send more flights to the Middle East should correct a "serious imbalance" in the Philippine aviation industry, the Freedom to Fly Coalition has said.

"Clearly, a serious imbalance exists which needs to be corrected," the group said in a position paper presented to the Civil Aeronautics Board last week.

It said while the country's carriers were sending 320 flights a week to destinations in Asia, only 30 weekly flights were scheduled for destinations in the Middle East.

The coalition stressed that out of over 3 million overseas Filipino workers, some 1.2 million were in the Middle East.

During peak seasons in December, "passengers have to book six months in advance in order to get confirmed seats (to a Middle East destination), if at all," it said.

It added that the situation worsened when pioneer flag carrier Philippine Airlines Inc. decided to reduce its flights to the Middle East even before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States to increase its services to the Australasian market.

Another group, the Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-anak ng Migranteng Pilipino Inc., presented a similar position paper to the CAB.

"With more flights, our OFWs will be able to reach their destinations on their chosen schedules, (It) would also lessen the risk of our OFWs being stranded during peak seasons," it said.

The Philippines is currently working on an air services agreement with the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Yemen.

Cebu Pacific-PAL row bringing down air fare

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

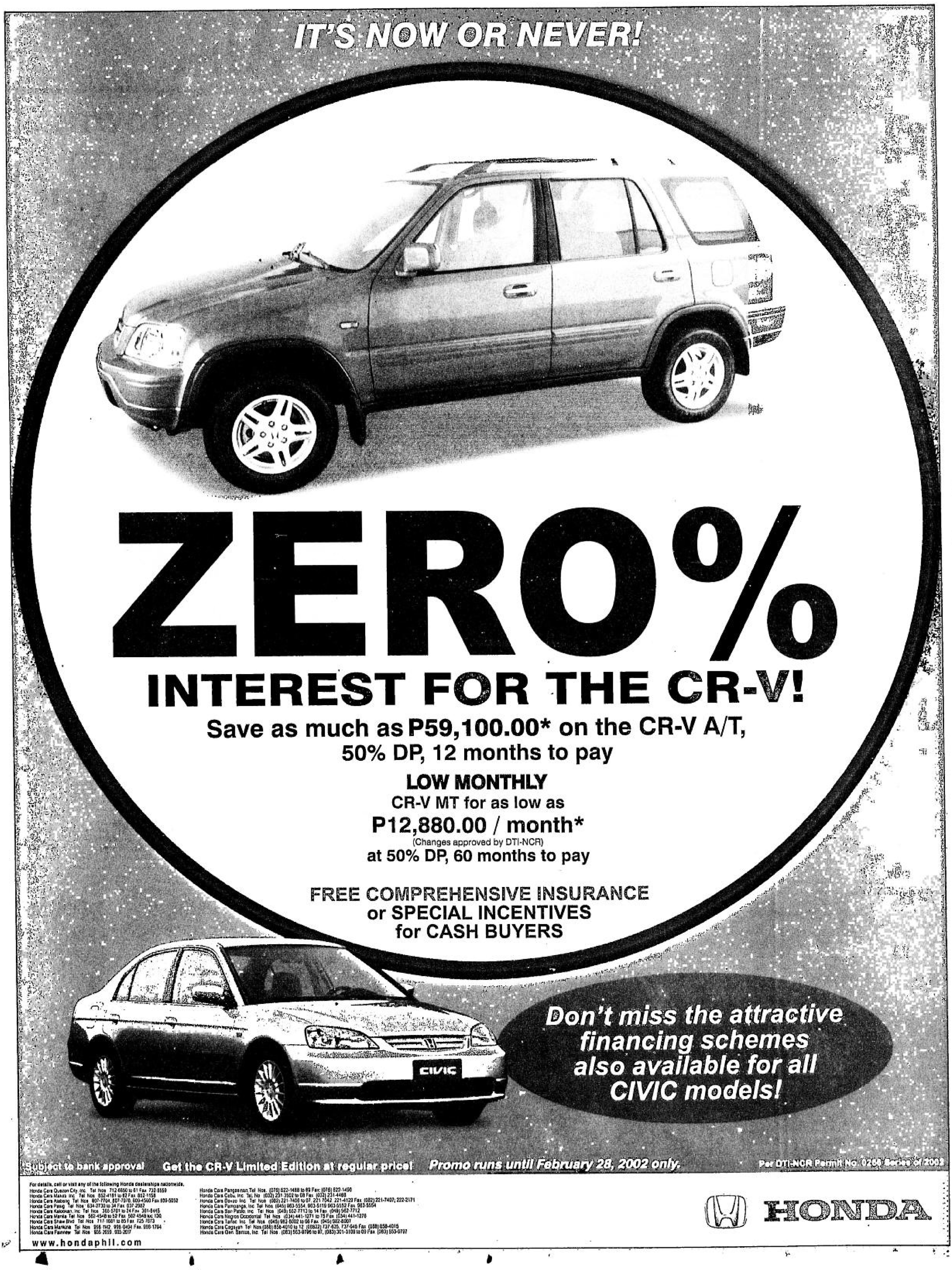
CEBU Pacific Air has engaged Philippine Airlines Inc. in a dogfight over the lucrative Manila-Hong Kong route, as the airline of taipan John Gokongwei Jr. offers rock-bottom round trip tickets to lure passengers away from the national flag carrier owned by fellow taipan Lucio Tan.

Travel agency insiders said the Manila-Hong Kong airfare has fallen sharply since Cebu Pacific made its maiden international flight because of the upstart airline's aggressive pricing strategy.

They said Cebu Pacific has been offering agents a roundtrip ticket to Hong Kong for $93 compared to PAL's airfare of $110. Both rates include hotel accommodation.

Whatever the outcome of the price war between Cebu Pacific and PAL, Filipino travelers are the clear winners in the dogfight, considering they used to spend more than $200 per person to go to the former British colony, industry observers said.

Hostilities between Cebu Pacific and PAL are expected to heat up even further next month when Cebu Pacific increases its flight frequency from twice a day to three times a day beginning March.



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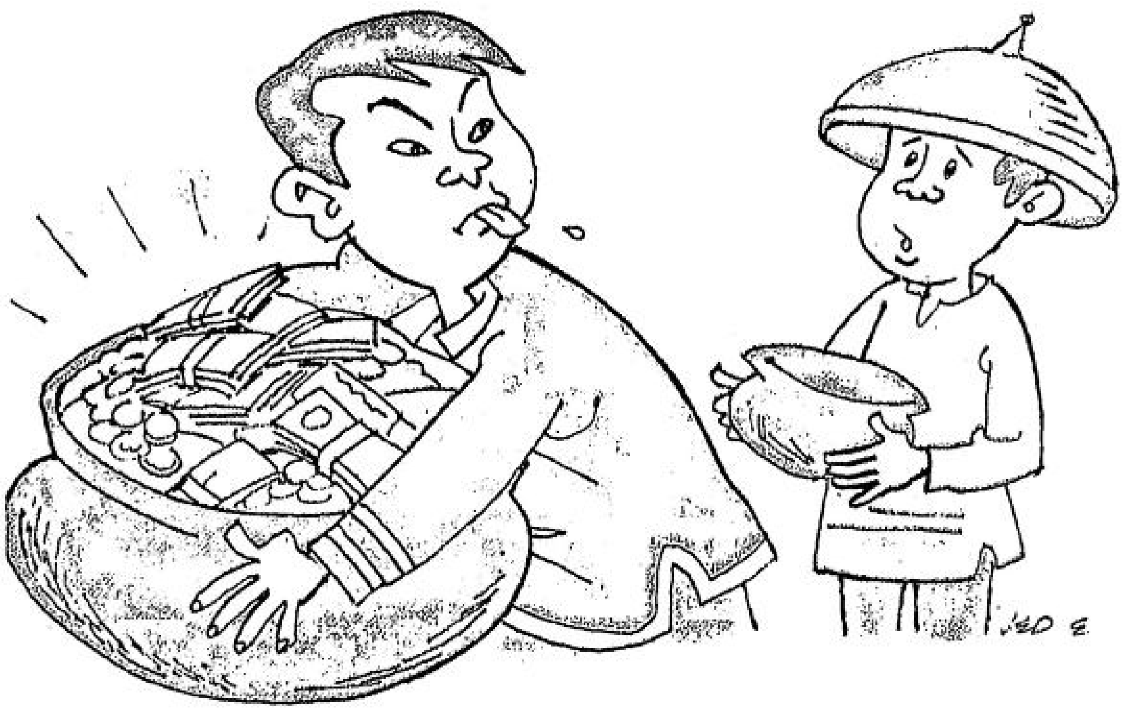
Quality: RP's best bet against China

By Raul C. Dancel

With the Chinese economic juggernaut on a roll, not a few economists are saying that the other economies in the region, including the Philippines, may just have to settle for crumbs.



THE MACAPAGAL administration is keeping a close eye on China—and it has a good reason to be concerned.

China has been accepted to the World Trade Organization and is now, more than ever, Asia's biggest magnet for foreign direct investments. Multinational companies are being drawn to China because of that country's cheap labor and a market of over 1.26 billion people.

China's growth has been "absolutely unbelievable," Patrick Delpy, Alcatel director for key account management and customer development in the Asia-Pacific region, said in a recent news briefing in Manila.

"A few years ago, China was not important," said Delpy, a senior executive in Alcatel's Chinese office. "Today, it's booming. Its benchmark now is no longer Hong Kong or Singapore, but New York."

Alcatel is one of several multinational companies spending a lot of money in getting a head start in China. The French telecommunications equipment maker currently has a joint venture in China, Shanghai Bell Co. Ltd.

Put up in 1984, Shanghai Bell chalked up $1.1 billion in sales last year, up 45 percent from a year earlier and now has about 6,000 people working in its factories.

The company is currently producing a sizable chunk of the switching equipment, mobile phones and optic fibers that Alcatel ships to Asia and Europe.

"What the joint venture has brought us in China is the ability to export in a massive way outside China, something we were not able to do in a massive way from Taiwan or Malaysia or Vietnam. These run from mobile phones, optical fibers, including switching and transmission equipment, mobile equipment," Delpy said.

Economic juggernaut

With the Chinese economic juggernaut on a roll, not a few economists are saying that the other economies in the region, including the Philippines, may just have to settle for crumbs.

"Generally speaking, China is a threat not just to the Philippines but to most other countries in Asia," Kengo Toda, president of Matsushita Communication Industrial Corp. of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER.

"A number of Japanese investments are going to China, and several companies in Singapore and Malaysia are shifting their operations to China," he said.

"If no serious attention is given to the Philippines' manufacturing capabilities, then the country will have problems two to three years from now," Toda said.

US investment bank Lehman Brothers said in a report that while Asia, excluding Japan, should grow 5 percent this year, growth in Southeast Asia, in particular Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, should lag as these countries grapple with tough competition from China and with "unresolved structural economic problems."

China is forecast to grow 6.9 percent this year and 7.1 percent in 2003. In contrast, the Philippine economy is seen rising by just 3 percent this year and 4 percent in 2003.

The Macapagal administration is forecasting a gross domestic product growth of about 4 to 4.5 percent this year, while gross national product is seen expanding 4.5 to 5.5 percent.

Trade strategies

The Department of Trade and Industry is currently consulting with a number of businessmen to come up with "defensive and offensive trade strategies" in relation to China's entry into the WTO.

This early, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II is sounding out the alarm bells and telling everyone to "fortify ourselves."

China's industries, he has warned, are posing a big threat to Philippine companies. Chinese goods, which already swamps the Philippine market, is expected to increase substantially with China's acceptance into the WTO.

The Philippines is not too keen on taking in China as a member of the Asean Free Trade Area in 2010, according to Roxas.

He said the government and the business sector would have to identify areas or products where the Philippines should enhance its competitiveness to compete with China's industries.

China beats the Philippines in most manufactured goods in terms of production costs and variety because of its low labor costs.

Opportunities

Roxas said, however, that while China was a threat to Philippine industries, that country also offered a big market for Philippine-manufactured goods and commodities with its huge population.

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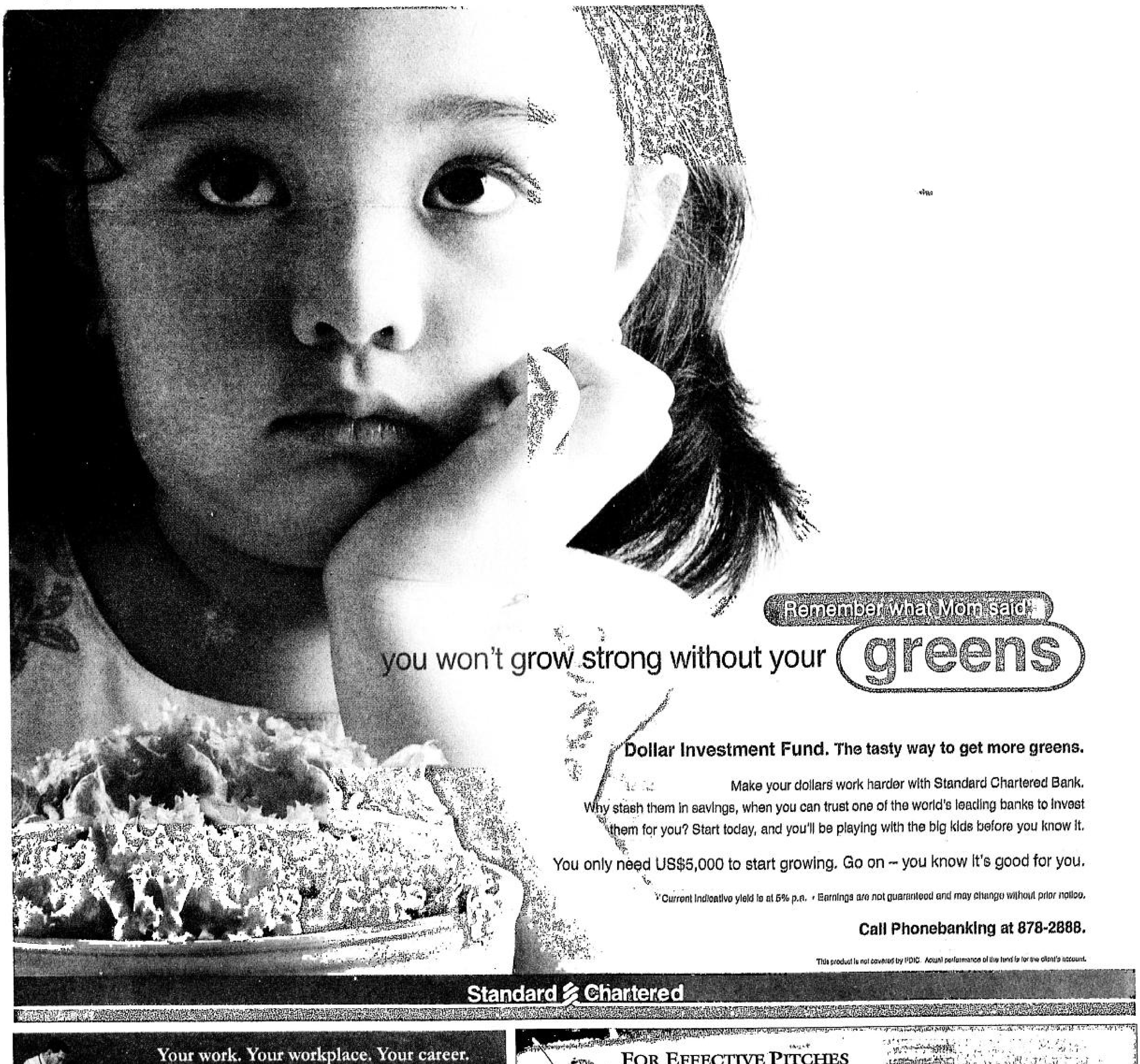
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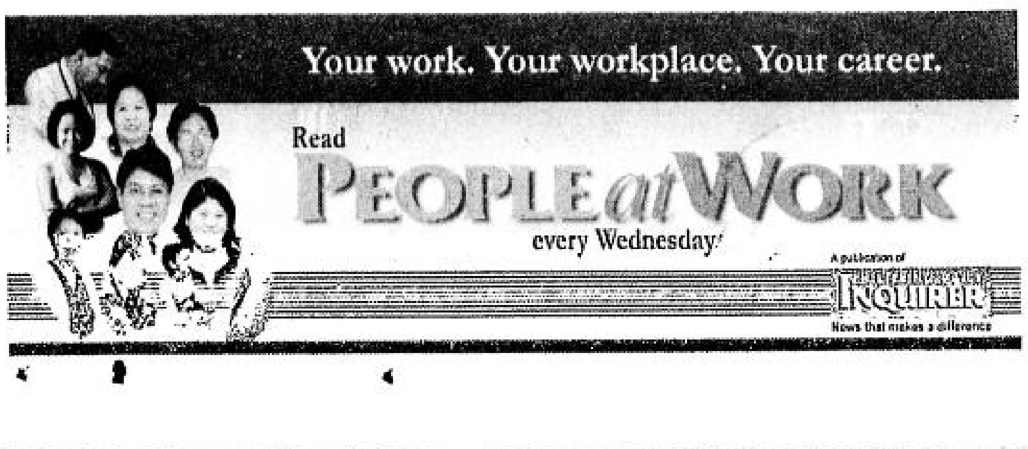
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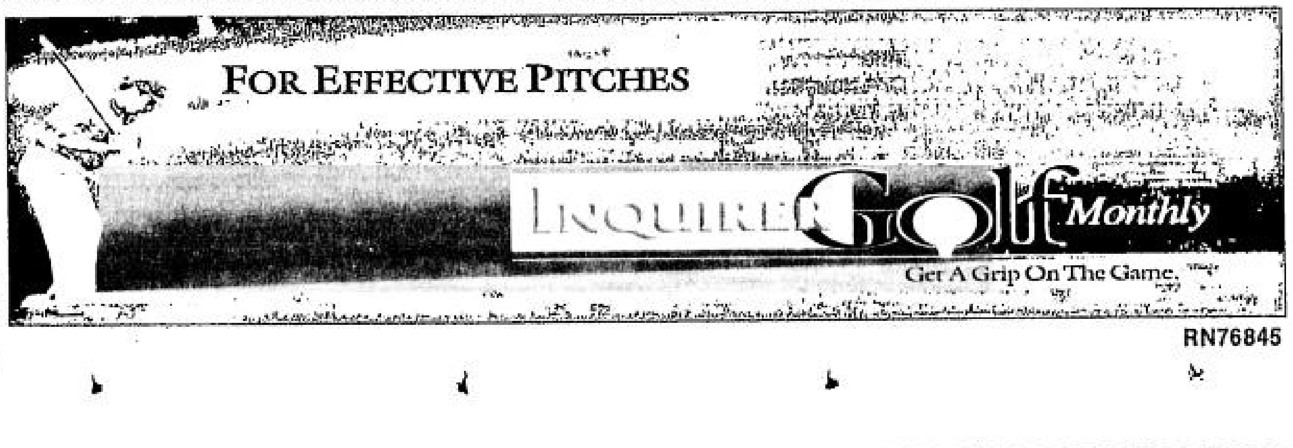
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Ensure a firm's success by choosing the right staff

By Anne Luisa E. Villarico

CHOOSING the right people to handle positions of responsibility is the biggest factor that determines the success of a company.

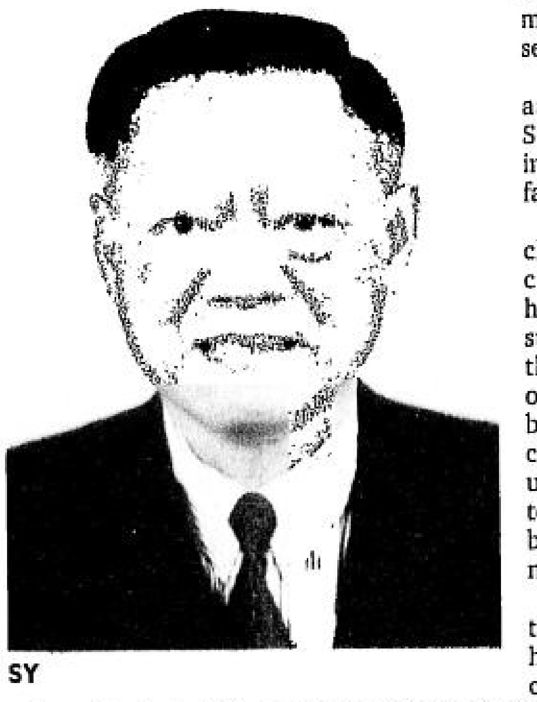
The ability to choose his people well enabled Julio Sy Sr., president of Busco Sugar Milling Co. Inc., to raise the sugar milling firm from the ruins of the sugar crash in the early 1980s.

Sy says he relies on his 49 years of experience in the business industry to enable him to choose the right people who can be trusted to handle key positions.

He often uses his common sense and considers himself more of a "practical businessman" than a professional.

"You should also put your trust in your people and in their abilities to make decisions. But in the end, you should see to it that these people would deliver during crunch time," Sy explains.

Putting trust and confidence to his team could be the reason why the 69-year-old Sy, who did not even finish his second year in college, was able to manage not just the sugar mill, but several large firms in different fields of business.



SY

Dropout

Sy had to quit school while he was a sophomore at the Silliman University because he had to devote time to the family business, which was completely destroyed by a fire.

At 21, he was already a general manager/CEO of New Bian Yek Commercial Inc., a family-owned rice, corn and general merchandise business.

From the family business, he moved on to head Busco as well as Hideco Sugar Milling Co. Inc., another sugar milling firm, and Lorenzo Shipping Co., a domestic cargo container service company.

He was even cited as the Outstanding Silliminian Awardee in Business, even if he failed to finish school.

Sy says he keeps close tabs on all the companies that he heads through constant monitoring, either through phone or actual visits to his businesses. He also conducts regular Saturday meetings to see to it that the various businesses are running smoothly.

Sy emphasizes that that sincerity and honesty in communicating with employees are vital factors in the business.

It is only through building genuine trust with employees, he says, that an executive can gain credibility and command respect.

MANAGEMENT STYLES

Sincere communication

"You must have sincere communication either with your employees or with the planters. You have to tell them your exact plan and why you want them to cooperate . . . You should mean what you say so that people can respect you," he adds.

Busco Sugar Milling Corp. was the first sugar mill in Bukidnon. Japan's Marubeni Corp. put it up for the Bukidnon Sugar Milling Co. in 1975.

The collapse in the prices of sugar in the world market did not spare Bukidnon, triggering a steep production decline. As a result, the company failed to settle its financial obligations. Sy's group acquired the sugar mill in an open bidding.

"We acquired Busco in 1988. At that time its capacity is only 6,000 tons of cane. We were able to increase that to 12,000-13,000 canes a day in a span of 14 years to a modern mill," Sy says.

The Bukidnon-based sugar mill has continually expanded from 18,000 hectares to 48,000 ha. It has 597 employees.

"We have helped generate income in the province," adds Sy.

Sy says he tries to create an atmosphere of unity between planters and millers. This is to help the two groups work together and survive in the sugar industry.

"We've kept on improving the efficiency of the mill since the time we bought it and we continued to expand," adds Sy.

For the past 12 crop years, Busco has ranked second among the top sugar producers in terms of canes milled and sugar produced.

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Aim for triple bottom line...with a CLASP!

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Dr. Corazon PB. Claudio

GENERATING an income is every company's priority. For some or, perhaps, for many, it is THE priority. But any company that aims for profit alone is now being left behind by the increasing global trend to aim for triple bottom line—economic development, which includes economic profitability, environmental management and sustainability, and social equity and progress.

These factors are the three main pillars of sustainable development. We have to build all of them if we want to meet the needs of our citizenry, without compromising the ability of our children and others to follow to meet their own needs.

Our government, led by President Macapagal-Arroyo, is now working hard to build these three pillars.

The multi-sectoral Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, a policy-making body, is only one of the many organizations in government that are involved in this work. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has been leading efforts on the second pillar—environmental management and sustainability.

But the DENR's management, under the leadership of Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez, has recognized that environmental protection and conservation cannot go far unless they are accompanied by measures for achieving economic and social development.

Thus, one of the DENR's priorities now is to provide wealth-creating opportunities that will also protect and conserve the environment.

Three pillars

But the government cannot build the three pillars alone. Hence, several members of the Management Association of the Philippines, including myself, are now extending our help to the government.

In the DENR, we are also enjoining private investors to help in the sustainable development of our country, through the newly established Private Sector Cooperation and Investment Program (PSCIP).

The social issues that we Filipinos and others have been battling with—poverty, terrorism, etc.—threaten not only the social and environmental pillars that we have been building, but also the profitability of our companies.

We, thus, urge business companies to aim for triple bottom line now. One way to do so is with CLASP.

What is CLASP? This is the latest initiative of the DENR. It means Community Livelihood Assistance Special Program—one of the major contributions of Secretary Alvarez's administration to Ms Macapagal's goal to reduce poverty.

The word "clasp" normally means to embrace or to grasp firmly. That is also what the DENR wants to do through its CLASP—to embrace the poor and grasp them firmly so that we can pull them out from the abyss of poverty.

The DENR-CLASP aims to reduce poverty in resource-dependent communities, through appropriate and environmentally sound technologies, information, technical assistance, and other resources for sustainable livelihood.

Target participants and beneficiaries of the CLASP are local communities, through the DENR's partnership with peoples' and non-governmental organizations (POs and NGOs), local government units, and business and industry.

CLASP

The DENR is now mobilizing its national and field offices to identify and introduce DENR-related livelihood projects that the local communities can adopt. It offers a small seed fund to a few selected communities who are expected to be the models for others.

It has formed a coordinating group of competent and dedicated officials who will lead the delivery of technical services. The department is extending this help through the DENR-CLASP, with the hope that it will attract additional assistance from others, especially from the private sector.

The technical assistance from the DENR shall include training, research and development (R&D), and other services that are within the department's capability to offer.

The last phrase is the issue—the DENR's resources limit its good intentions. Hence, even at this early stage, the department, through its private sector program, the PSCIP, is already inviting business and industry to participate actively in the DENR-CLASP. This program can also help a participating company earn, for example, by marketing the agro-forestry and other products of the program.

The DENR-CLASP is starting with lessons learned from earlier DENR initiatives on livelihood and with selected environmentally sound technologies for various areas—uplands, lowlands, coastal and urban areas, etc.

The technologies are coming from the laboratory of the DENR's R&D arm—the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau. (This bureau, which has several outstanding Ph.D. holders, can also do contract R&D work for groups that want to address ENR problems or development needs with new or adapted technologies.)

The DENR-CLASP is also inviting other individuals and groups to share whatever appropriate technologies or ideas they have for local adaptation.

This is not the first time that the government is implementing livelihood projects. All administrations before President Macapagal's had done so. But many of the projects have come and gone or have not really led to long-term, sustainable livelihood opportunities. A wide variety of seeds are planted and grown with products that are just enough for the tables of the farmers.

We now have to improve our livelihood strategies. Presidential adviser Cito Lorenzo, a fellow MAPper, who faces the big challenge of creating one million jobs, advises us to start with the market. This is also the suggestion of many of us who are coming from the business community. Yes, we need to adopt a market-oriented view—with due regard to the three pillars mentioned above.

One example of implementing such a strategy comes from Albert M.G. Garcia, incoming president of the Rotary Club, Makati Forbes Park. He proposes that we grow the Roselle plant of the hibiscus family in agro-forestry areas.

Roselle is like the coconut tree in terms of usefulness of all of its parts. Yet it grows faster; one can harvest its fruits in three months, as Garcia has proven in a pilot farm in Batangas.

A former resident of Australia, Garcia has been involved in international marketing of food products for many years. He says that products obtainable from the Roselle plant, such as herbal tea and fiber, have big established and growing international markets that the Philippines can aim for.

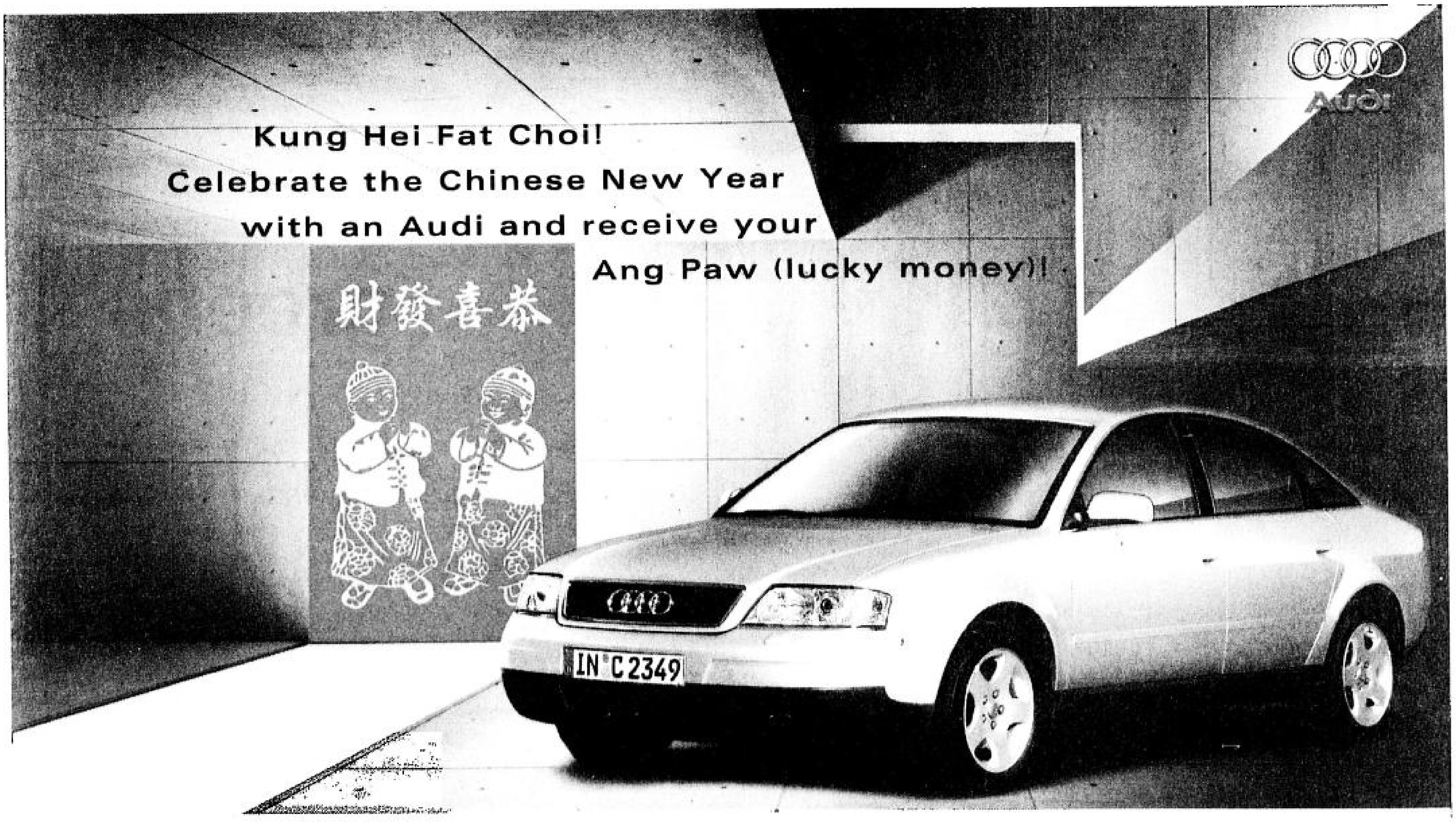
"Think globally, act locally." Yes, we've to start thinking and working together this way. Garcia's proposal on the Roselle plant challenges us to look beyond our backyards.

But it requires joint government-private sector-community collaboration to succeed. The private sector cannot also do it alone. Innovative proposals like this require some R&D, technical, organizational, and financial assistance, and community support for local adaptation and action. They also require some institutional and policy reforms from both the business and government sectors.

As one ADB paper concluded: ". . . the poor could benefit even more from growth if institutions and policies are appropriately reformed." (E.M. Pernia, October 2001. "Is Growth Good Enough for the Poor?")

We need reforms in the attitude, strategies, and policies of business. Aiming for triple bottom line, which the companies of some MAP members are already doing, is a basic reform expected from business. But we also need reforms from the government, such as better policies and governance. Indeed, we need to clasp—to embrace and help each other to reform.

Note: Launching of the DENR-CLASP and the DENR's "Kabuhayan para sa Kalikasanan" will be held today, Feb. 18, 10 a.m., at the Liwasang Aurora, Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City. *(Dr. Claudio co-chairs with Fernando Zobel de Ayala and Felipe Palafox Jr. the Management Association of the Philippines' Environment and Urban Development Committee. She is senior adviser of the DENR and incoming president of the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)*



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Quality: RP's best bet vs China

From page C1

Semiconductors, minerals and agricultural commodities would find a big market in China, he said.

Matsushita Philippines director Reynaldo Lico said the Philippines could also take advantage of the cheap materials that China produces to bring down the costs of locally-produced commodities like televisions, computers, printers and fax machines.

Alcatel's Delpy said "a lot will remain" for the Philippines, although not in the area of manufacturing.

"Our revenue here is growing, and there's no reason to stop now," he said. "But since we have never manufactured in the Philippines, there is no reason right now to start manufacturing in the Philippines."

"But the market will be the driver," he stressed. "If there is a push from the market asking us strongly to be more present, then we'll have to respond."

Matsushita's Lico said local companies "must do something to be competitive."

"There's no way we can compete with China in terms of volume, but in terms of quality, we still have an edge. So we must go after quality," Lico said.

soluziona

Len delos Reyes *Account Manager* sprojects@inquirer.com.ph **Aries Espinosa** *Editor*

MESSAGES

I JOIN the management and staff in celebrating the birth of Soluziona Philippines Inc.

Our country's full entry into the information-based world of the 21st century is one of the main goals of my administration. I therefore commend Soluziona Philippines, formerly Iberpacific Inc. for bringing to our country its wealth of experience in business transformation and information technology. By offering world-class solutions to business enterprises in the country and the region, you exemplify the Filipino will and capability to excel in the global era.

Our government considers information technology (IT) as a vital sector that will greatly support our economic growth and development. Your expert services in the fields of Management Consulting, Business Intelligence, Customer Relationship Management, Internet Services, Applications Development and Strategic IT Outsourcing in the Asia Pacific Region bolsters our vision of making the Philippines as a leader in IT and related technologies in the region.

I urge you to continue keeping the quality of your services at par with world-class standards. Let us continue working together for economic stability and equitable growth.

Congratulations and *mabuhay*!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

OUR warmest greetings to the management and staff of Soluziona Philippines Inc. on the launching of your company as an official part of the signature international mother company – the Soluziona Group, the largest professional services firm in Spain.

It is heartening to note that Soluziona Asia Pacific – which has business presence in various Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and China – has chosen Soluziona Philippines Inc. to serve as its regional headquarters in Asia. This would send a strong signal of confidence to the overseas business community that the Philippines is, indeed, a feasible platform for overseas operations.

With the continuing wave of new technology revolutionizing the way business is conducted all over the world, the Philippines must keep in step with the latest developments in IT initiatives and applications especially considering the tremendous potential of our workforce for servicing regional backroom operations for MNCs and transnational companies from the global community. Indeed, much can be gained from utilizing information and communication technologies for increased efficiency, transparency, productivity and global competitiveness in our production, marketing and services sectors.

It is for this reason that government has been mounting an aggressive campaign to promote our IT professionals and develop world-class services for the emerging new world of IT and E-Commerce. With a growing number of firms turning to outsourcing and subcontracting as strategic management tools, the DTI continues to pursue initiatives to highlight our IT and IT-enabled capabilities towards positioning the country as the ideal choice for offshore business requirements and as the "e-Services Hub of Asia."

We definitely look forward to the success of Soluziona in the Philippines as this would constitute a shining illustration of what Filipino-Spanish collaboration in technology and investments can achieve for the mutual benefit of the two countries' business communities and IT sectors.

Mabuhay!

MAR ROXAS
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry

ON BEHALF of the Information Technology and E-Commerce Council, I would like to congratulate Soluziona Philippines for the launch of their new corporate identity, allowing them to carry the international name of their mother company – Soluziona, Spain's largest professional services firm.

Soluziona Philippines has been helping their clients implement change through the knowledge and innovative skills of their professionals. And as the regional headquarters of the Asia Pacific region, Soluziona Philippines is a direct testament to the growing confidence of the international markets in the potential and capabilities of the Filipino.

With this growing confidence and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's firm commitment to the development of Information and Communications Technology in the country, the Philippines is positioning itself to be the next e-services hub of Asia.

We, as a people, have all the tools and capabilities necessary to realize this dream. And together with companies such as Soluziona Philippines, we are on our way to make this a reality.

Thank you very much.

VIRGILIO L. PENA
PA for ICT
Executive Director, ITECC

IT IS with pride that I announce the launching of Soluziona Philippines.

We have proven our value in the fields of information technology and management consulting, giving quality service to our clients. Via our firm commitment and dedication to our professionals, a strict adherence to superior quality products and services, and a stern orientation towards technology, we seek to enhance our clients' business efficiency and productivity, turning them into world-class corporations.

Through the strategic integration of people, process and technology, Soluziona Philippines aims to become the Asia Pacific reference for professional services with undisputed leadership in Utilities and an established name across the sectors we serve such as Telecommunications, Financial Services, Healthcare and Education. Our operations have reached China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

I would like to commend and express my sincerest gratitude to our clients who have allowed us to help them achieve their best potential; to our partners who have worked hand in hand with us in serving the needs of various businesses, and of course; to the professionals of Soluziona Philippines who have shown their commitment and diligence in dealing with our clients.

Mabuhay and good luck!

JOSE T. GUINGONA
President
Soluziona Philippines

Greetings! I would like to congratulate Soluziona Philippines on its full integration with the Soluziona group!

At Soluziona, we have integrated all the skills and knowledge gained from hands-on work experience all over the world. This knowledge enriched by years of work with thousands of clients worldwide is now within your reach. The experience of our 8,400 professionals, working on projects in more than 45 countries, is now available to all our clients in the Asia-Pacific region.

Around the world, the companies that strive for excellence are adopting new technologies and reengineering their business practices to help them achieve their goals. In the Asia Pacific region, Soluziona Philippines will act as our new regional hub, and will be responsible for managing our business opportunities throughout the area.

We at Soluziona would like to commend Soluziona Philippines for its outstanding performance over the past six years. Despite economic challenges, the company has achieved a compounded annual growth rate of almost 70%, showing exemplary dedication; exceeding clients' expectations. To Meralco and Union Fenosa, thank you very much for the unfaltering support and commitment you have given us. We are looking forward to more years of collaboration.

Soluziona Philippines has also contributed in an important way to the experience of Soluziona and the knowledge we can provide to clients. As you know from our slogan "Welcome to knowledge" we consider our knowledge as the real added-value that we offer to our customers, and in that sense, my message today is clear, Welcome to Knowledge! Welcome to Soluziona!

SANTIAGO ROURA
General Manager
Soluziona

Soluziona Philippines

SOLUZIONA Philippines Inc., formerly known as Iberpacific, is an international professional services firm offering client corporations total service in business transformation and information technology. We provide consulting expertise in the fields of Information Technology, and Management Consulting. We offer proven experience and valuable knowledge in advanced technologies to companies aiming to use them for strategic advantage.

Who we are

Soluziona is found in 47 countries in five continents. The international activity among these consulting firms has provided us in Soluziona Philippines with a valuable source of knowledge and experience, which has consequently fueled the rapid expansion of the global network. At the same time, it has allowed us to tap professionals from around the world to participate in our projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

Through the strategic integration of people, process, and technology, we aim to develop long-term partnerships with our clients, help them improve the productivity of their business, and enhance their value. Via our firm commitment and dedication to our professionals, a strict adherence to superior quality products and services, and a stern orientation towards technology, we seek to enhance our clients' business efficiency and productivity, turning them into world-class corporations.

We work side-by-side with our clients in developing solutions and implementing changes to help their companies meet today's, as well as tomorrow's, business demands. We build long-term relationships with client companies while in the process improving their productivity and enhancing their value.

Our key value is in the knowledge and innovative skills of our people: professionals who have developed their successful experiences into expertise at helping clients implement change through strategic management thinking and proven integrated solutions. This knowledge is the best resource that we share with our clients. Welcome to Knowledge, Welcome to Soluziona.

Our practices

Soluziona Philippines offers services that aim to integrate a company's core business process and develop human resource towards a high-performance company culture, thereby increasing the company's efficiency and productiveness towards global competitiveness. We also provide our clients with powerful information systems developed by Soluziona and by third party Business Partners based on advanced information and communication technologies; management systems that are proven and recognized worldwide.

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VERTICAL SOLUTIONS

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Healthcare
Education
Finance

SOLUZIONA Philippines' employees

The world is my [illegible]
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My day-to-day project is knowing you and your business. That means going in-depth and hands-on -- after all, that's the only way to understand you. With years of experience tucked under my belt, I can help you arrive at the best possible solutions. And, in the process, help you rediscover your business. Who am I? I am Soluziona. Welcome to knowledge.

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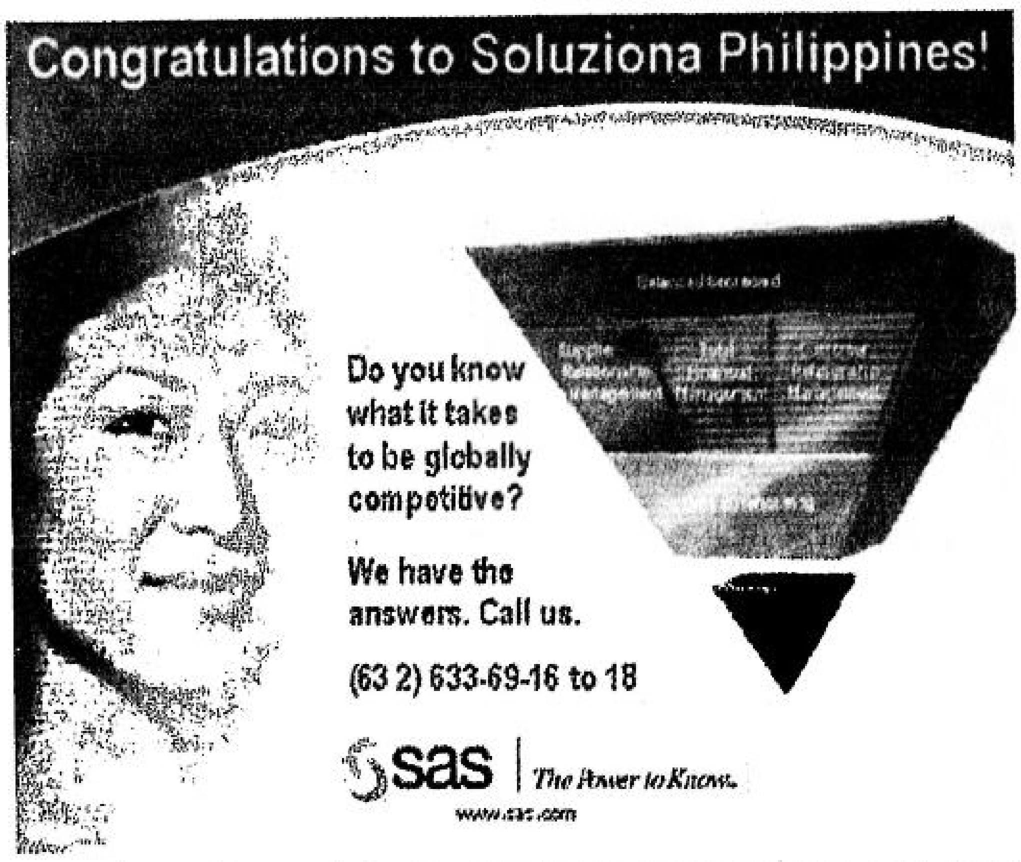

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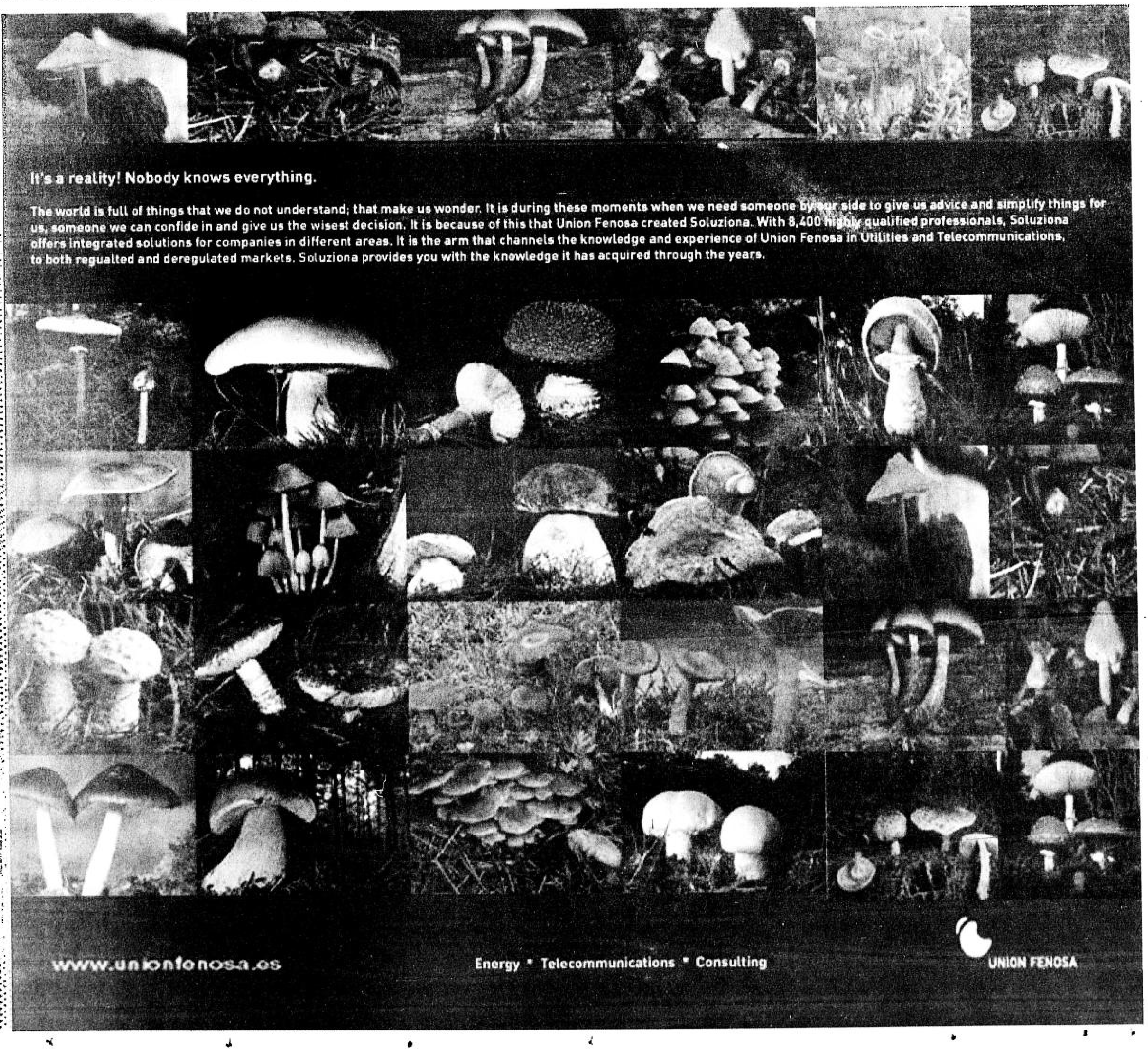

It's a reality! Nobody knows everything.

The world is full of things that we do not understand; that make us wonder. It is during these moments when we need someone by our side to give us advice and simplify things for us, someone we can confide in and give us the wisest decision. It is because of this that Union Fenosa created Soluziona. With 8,400 highly qualified professionals, Soluziona offers integrated solutions for companies in different areas. It is the arm that channels the knowledge and experience of Union Fenosa in Utilities and Telecommunications, to both regualted and deregulated markets. Soluziona provides you with the knowledge it has acquired through the years.

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Our services

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Whether it is Business to Business (B2B), Business to Customer (B2C) or Business to Operations (B2O) Soluziona Philippines understands the steps in this transformation and can help you develop your e-business.

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Soluziona Philippines develops custom applications for companies with unique application erquirements.

Technology Outsourcing

Allows clients to transfer accountability for non-core technology activities to Soluziona, a world-class service provider.

Process Management

Allows businesses to adapt quickly and efficiently to their environment through global solutions in Organizations Design, Business Process Reengineering, Outsourcing and Process Optimization.

Business Intelligence

We help you plan your BI strategy, build your datawarehouse and implement BI applications in order to transform company data into strategic knowledge.

Customer Relationship Management

Soluziona can help companies define and execute the strategies that will enable them to identify, attract, and retain customers.

Enterprise Resource Planning

Consulting and implementation of ERP solutions to streamline operations.

Vertical Solutions

Utilities. Open Utilities is an integrated modular solutions for managing distribution (SGD), customer relations (SGC) and generation (CEN). Open Utilities is designed to optimize utilities' key business processes and features the most advanced technology along with flexible and standard operation.

Healthcare. Sonata is a hospital management system that handles administration, patient services, financial and inventory matters for healthcare facilities.

Education. The OMEGA (Online Management of Enrollment and Grades Administration) is a system developed to streamline the enrollment and grading processes of colleges and universities.

Highlights of 2001

Year 2001 has been a year of harvest for Soluziona Asia Pacific with new engageinents in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, and an outsourcing contract in Manila.

This harvest comes after several years of building patiently a talent base of highly qualified consultants and a network of country-based partners and strategic alliances to help establish Soluziona's reputation among the region's leading utilities.

To fuel the regional expansion, Soluziona has relied on the development of a strong regional base: Soluziona Philippines and its consultants who have grown in knowledge and experience working for the Meralco Transformation Project and for various Soluziona-led projects worldwide. Today, Soluziona Philippines has more than 200 IT professionals with key knowledge of the business and management systems of utilities as well as other high growth technologies such as business intelligence, CRM and internet solutions. It is also pushing for leadership in vertical solutions for the Education sector with its On-line Management of Enrollment and Grades Administration (OMEGA) and for the Health Care Sector, with Sonata, the Hospital Information System. In the Philippines, Soluziona is now a recognized leader in information technology solutions for utilities—closing a landmark IT outsourcing contract in April 2001 and achieving a compounded annual growth rate of almost 70%.

> 'To fuel the regional expansion, Soluziona has relied on the development of a strong regional base'

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Email:
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Global warming threatens our environment and society today. The effects are unimaginable and put us all in a hotspot. The primary culprit of this environmental degradation is the uncontrolled emission of greenhouse gases into the ecosystem.

The Global Environmental Facility created a climate change mitigation program called The Efficient Lighting Initiative (ELI). ELI was established to undertake the environmental challenge through a comprehensive transformation of the lighting market by promoting the use of energy efficient lighting technologies. To consumers this means reduced energy costs, better lighting performance and longer lamp life.

ELI-qualified products significantly reduce the greenhouse effect. By using ELI-qualified Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL), T-8 Linear Fluorescent Lamps and high-efficiency, low-loss ballasts, you can do your part in saving the environment.

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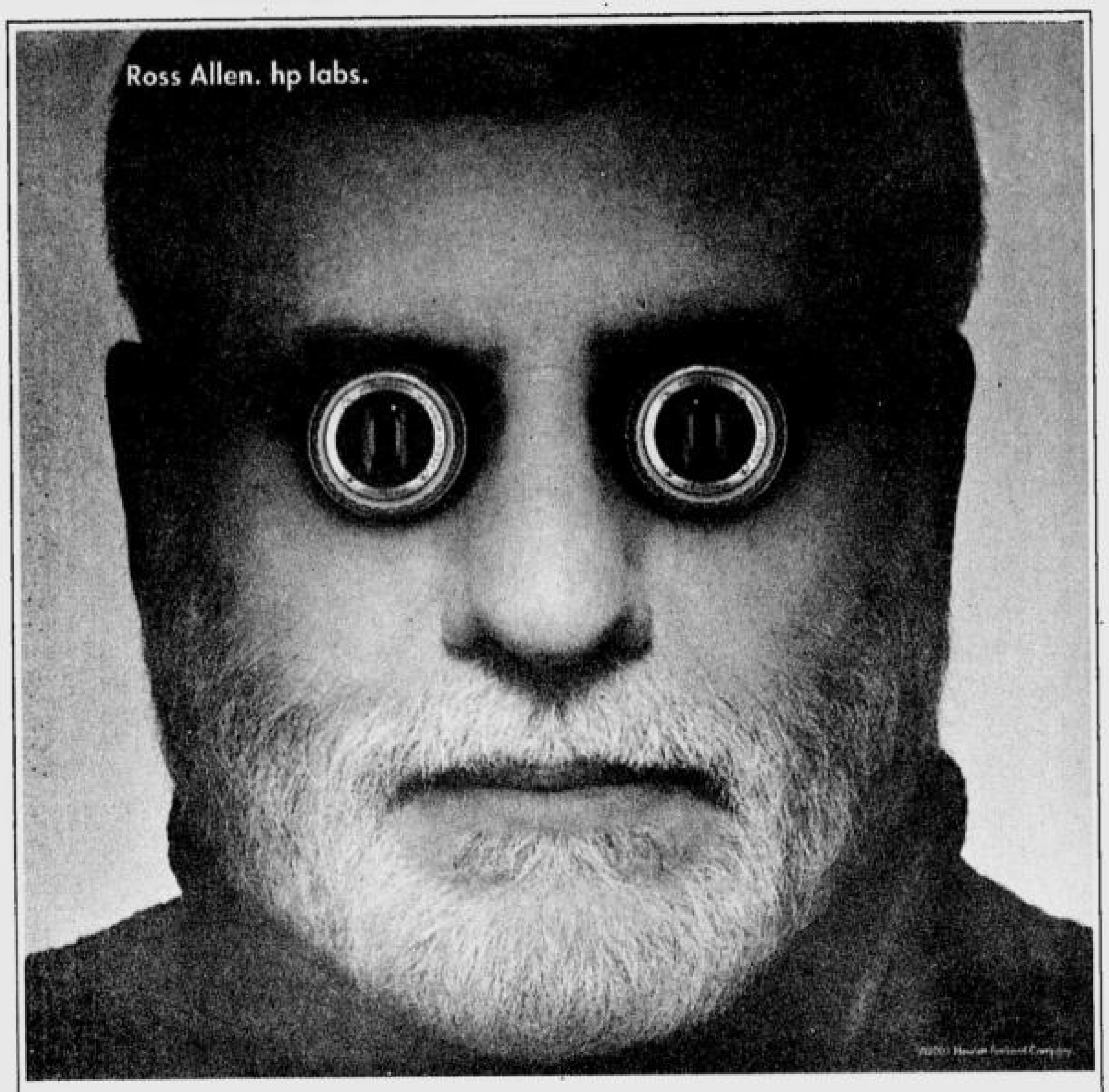
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Alarm to bridge Digital Divide shrills

By Butch J. Pajarillo

THE issue of bridging the Digital Divide, giving more people access to the Internet, has been a top priority since a decade ago. But its urgency is like that of a man drowning in a shark-infested sea. A rescue chopper arrives, the pilot rolls down a ladder, and the drowning man ignores it: "Give me an hour. *Pagiisipan ko muna.*"

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. knows the alarm to bridge the Digital Divide has sounded more shrill. He's gone around north and south of the country, and found thousands of college students graduating from campuses without having sent an e-mail. Last week when he met with a delegation of some 100 presidents and vice presidents from the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (Pasuc), he asked that they move together faster like right now.

The professors, he said, must act with the urgency of CEOs and master salesmen who will be fired by their boards if by their laid-back attitude will cause Filipinos to miss business opportunities.

One restraint they can hurdle is money. The last place to spend their energies to raise cash is the Department of Budget. If the professors can show Senator Magsaysay a good business plan, he may have a spare million pesos from his countryside development plan. An inspiring business plan, too, could trigger an outbreak of philanthropy among other senators and congressmen. "If you have a good business plan," Magsaysay said, "how can I say no?"

MAGSAYSAY

SALAZAR

A good plan is one that reflects the brainpower and willpower exerted by the college professors themselves to amass counterpart funds. "It's easier to convince us to share fifty-fifty than to start from scratch," said Magsaysay. Why not prompt do-good corporations to pay for training in computer skills of professors? Prospects that the companies could have first crack at employing these graduates could loosen corporate wallets. Or the faculty could draw visions of a grateful electorate resuming the favor if mayors would allot portions of their internal revenue for personal computers.

Still there would be room for a strong lobby. No amount of fundraising could ever cover the costs of putting up telecommunications systems.

As they talked, billions of dollars of income opportunities have gone the way of Internet-savvy professionals in regional hot zones like Tel Aviv, South Korea, Bangalore and Shanghai. Entrepreneurs worldwide are moving data, audio and video in cyberspace faster than Superman flies. Microprocessors are embedded in more tools and products with chips doubling in computing power roughly every 18 months. The number of commercial online activities makes Olympic-class jumps as more and more products and services are traded in cyberspace. Strides are made in telecommunications, agriculture, nanotechnology, biotechnology and alternative energies. Even the experts in Metro Manila and Cebu are getting a slice of the market, creating an unseen economy where high-wage and travel-prone Filipino workers seem surprised by Labor Day marches for higher minimum wages. Meanwhile, the college student in a remote province is waiting for a dial tone.

The obsession to make public college students compete for income opportunities prompted Manuel D. Punzal, commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education, and Mariano S. Salazar, chair of the ITelligent Group, to put together a problem-solving conference "Bridging the Digital Divide for State Universities and Colleges."

The Pasuc delegates went home from the day-long meeting with a tangible result—a formal agreement by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Rene Bañez to exempt corporations from paying the donor's tax if they donate personal computers to state schools.

The law allowing an exemption has been around for years, but prospective donors needed a clarification on the amount allowed. Under the agreement, the donor is entitled to deduct the net book value (acquisition cost less depreciation) of a personal computer from its income tax due. (It doesn't matter if a desktop is loaded with powerful software programs that could send a man to Mars and back. If a donated Amorsolo painting is worth P10 million now, the taxman will allow only an exemption of P5,000 when the buyer bought it 30 years ago.)

The professors also went home resolved to act with speed to complete the tough task ahead for connecting their schools to the Internet. There are now more than 400 million people online. Five years from now, the estimate is 673 million. The Internet-linked computer will be an ordinary appliance like the TV set. The most important address now is the e-mail address and the one that

Pricing your product . . .

From page C8

make and sell. They remain the same regardless of whether you increase or reduce your output. Examples of fixed costs are rental, salaries and professional fees.

You can compute for your break-even selling price, sales volume and sales using the break-even formula. The general formula is:

Total sales = Total costs

You need to understand these equations to compute your break-even selling price:

Unit Selling Price (USP) + Volume (Y) = Total Sales

Total Fixed Costs (TFC) + Unit Variable Cost (UVC) = Y + Total Cost

At break-even, Total Sales = Total Costs

If you put equations a and b together, it will look like this:

USP x Y = TFC + (UVC x Y)

If you simplify, you will get:

$$USP = \frac{TFC + (UVC \times Y)}{Y}$$

Look at this example. You manufacture T-shirts. For a batch of 2,500 T-shirts, your fixed costs total P100,000 and your unit variable cost is P25.00.

You compute for your break-even selling price by using the break-even formula. Therefore,

Total sales = Total costs
USP x 2,500 = P100,000 + (P25 x 2,500)
2,500 USP = P 100,000 + 62,500

$$USP = \frac{P\,162{,}500}{2{,}500}$$

USP = P 65

Why do you need to know your break-even selling price? If you sell a T-shirt for P65, you will not make a profit from your business, neither will you lose anything.

If you sell below P65, you are guaranteed to incur a loss from your operation. So, what are you in business for? The break-even selling price serves as your reference when you set your final selling price. You know how low you can go when you negotiate with your customers.

To check, replace USP with P65.
Therefore,
Total Sales = Total costs
USP x Y = TFC + (UVC + Y)
P65x2,500 = P100,000+(P25x2,500)
P 162,500 = P 162,500

2. Demand-based pricing. This approach depends on the number of customers you expect to want or demand your product or service.

You sell at a higher price when and where there is a strong demand and at a low price when or where the demand is weak, even if your cost per item is the same.

3. Competition-based pricing. This is a method where your selling price depends primarily on the prices charged by your competitors unlike in the two pricing methods where you compute your selling price based on your costs. Your price may be higher or lower compared with your competitors'.

It is not enough that you know how to determine your selling price. You must also know how to make your prices more attractive. Among the more commonly used methods are: psychological pricing, "bargain pricing," discount and combination pricing.

When you do not round off your price to a whole number but set it a few pesos or centavos below it, say P499 instead of P500, it feeds your customers' desire to realize a savings when they buy.

You can also offer two items for the price of one (buy one-take one). This gives your customers the impression that they are getting a bargain when actually they are not. If you have a very low cost on the goods you make and sell, you can afford to use this method.

You increase your sales when you sell to wholesalers and retailers. While they buy from you in big quantities, it is very likely that the wholesaler will buy more than the retailer. You can devise a discount structure where you give a bigger discount to the wholesaler, say, 20 percent, and 10 percent to the retailer.

Another way of getting more customers through a more attractive pricing strategy is by reducing your price for volume and cash buys. For example, you may sell a dozen donuts for P50 and charge P4.50 a piece.

Price setting is an activity that is crucial to your business or to any other business for that matter. The prices you set can either make or break your business. Keep in mind that, in general, your prices must be low enough to attract customers to buy and high enough to give your business a profit.

MOVEMENTS

New Prudentialife president

THE PRUDENTIAL Board of Directors has appointed senior vice president for finance Jose Alberto T. Alba as the new president of Prudential Group.

Alba has a wealth of experience in the pre-need indsutry and thorough academic preparation in leading the Prudentialife Group which is involved in financial services, real estate and travel/leisure.

Alba graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University with a Bachelor of Science in Management Engineering Degree in 1986.

He started as a senior financial analyst in the banking sector in 1987 before he joined Prudentialife as head of the credit and collection department of Prudentialife Education Plan Inc.

Before his appointment, Alba was responsible for the information technology needs and cash management of the Prudentialife Group as well as the strategic planning and business development of its affiliates.

Watson Wyatt appoints new director

WATSON Wyatt Worldwide has appointed Annella Heytens as director, Regional Data Services-Asia Pacific, to be based in Manila, Philippines.

Heytens will be responsible for overseeing the compensation and benefits survey business on a regional basis, driving consistency and improvements in survey process and methodology as well as working toward its global integration.

Prior to her appointment, Heytens was general manager of Watson Wyatt Beijing. She was responsible for building the operations there and under her leadership, won for Watson Wyatt China the prestigious Marco Polo Award.

Heytens holds an MS degree from Tufts University in Massachusetts and an MBA from Cornell University in New York.

Watson Wyatt is an international management consulting firm, with 90 offices worldwide.

Manila Pen's new GM

THE HONG KONG and Shanghai Hotels Ltd. has announced the promotion of David Batchelor to general manager of The Peninsula Manila.

Batchelor has taken up his post following seven years with The Peninsula Hong Kong as resident manager.

A certified public accountant, he joined the flagship hotel in 1994 as financial controller.

Previously, he has held various finance positions with The Regent Syndney and The Ritz Carlton Hotel Co. in his native Australia, then in Taipei with the Far Eastern Plaza Hotel.

Batchelor earned his Economics degree from the University of Adelaide before studying hotel management at the Asia-Pacific Basin Swiss Hotel Association International College of Hotel Management in Adelaide.

Fraser Place appointments

CARLO Gomez, general manager of Fraser Place Serviced Residences, recently announced the appointment of key officers for its operations.

The new appointees are Lily C. Santos, financial controller; Lizanne H. Tan, director of sales and marketing; and Lissa T. Mohammad Jafari, director of human resources.

As financial controller, Lily Santos brings with her more than 10 years of experience as financial officer in various companies and hotels including Century Imperial Palace Suites Inc. and First Pacific Davies Property Management Inc.

Tan, on the other hand, was previously connected with Oakwood Premier Ayala Center and the Makati Shangri-La Hotel as corporate sales manager.

Jafari, meanwhile, has more than two decades' experience in the field of human resources.

Fraser Place Serviced Residences is the latest property development project of management company Fraser Serviced Residences Phils. Inc., a subsidiary of Singapore-based Fraser Serviced Residences Pte. Ltd.

It is scheduled to open by the end of March this year.

Pan Pacific Manila's new GM

RICHARD M.P. Masselin is the new general manager of The Pan Pacific Manila. He is bringing with him a 13-year experience in the hotel industry having worked in France, South Pacific, West Africa and the United States of America. Prior to his appointment in Manila, he worked for three years as the resident manager of The Pan Pacific Bangkok.

An Institut de Management Hotelier International graduate of the prestigious Cornell-Essec, the young general manager also loves to engage in outdoor activities and paint in his spare time.

Delivering personalized care is the thrust championed by the new GM. French-born Masselin is optimistic about the hotel's performance in 2002 and enthusiastically shares that nothing beats a great service.

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By Ditas A. Esguerra
UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries

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2. How much your customers are willing to pay. You determine this by identifying your target market, learning about their characteristics, how many they are, where they are located, and what motivates them to buy your product or service.

3. Your competitors' prices. How much do other producers charge for the same or similar products or services that you have? Generally speaking, you may attract more customers if your prices are lower than those of the known competition.

On the other hand, charging higher prices may drive your customers to your competitors. However, you may have a purpose for charging a higher or a lower price. For example, you may want to offer a lower price for a product or service you want to introduce.

On the other hand, you may justify a decision to charge a higher price if you strongly feel that your product or service is better than your competitors', if you provide extra service such as free delivery, longer service hours, a good warranty, comfort in an airconditioned lounge with flowing coffee perhaps, or if you want to create a feeling of exclusivity and uniqueness.

Setting the price

Now that you have the basic information, you are ready to set a price for your product or service. You may calculate your price by using any of the three basic methods of pricing, namely, cost-based pricing, demand-based pricing, and competition-based pricing.

1. Cost-based pricing. In cost-based pricing, your primary consideration is the production cost where you calculate the unit production cost by dividing the total production cost over the number of units you produced. You can use this method in two ways: the cost-plus technique and break-even technique.

As its term implies, cost-plus means *cost* plus mark-up. This technique allows you to apply to the unit production cost a certain mark-up rate based on the unit cost.

For example, if your unit production cost is P35 and you apply a mark-up rate of 1.7, your selling price will be P59.50. The difference of P24.50 between your selling price and unit cost should be sufficient to cover your general administrative and selling expenses, and leave you with a reasonable profit.

In business language, the term break even generally means having sales that are equal to the cost of making and selling a product. At break even, you neither realize a profit nor incur a loss.

Break-even sales is the level of sales that will generate sales receipts equal to total cost. To use this technique, you must know how to break down your costs and the difference between variable and fixed costs.

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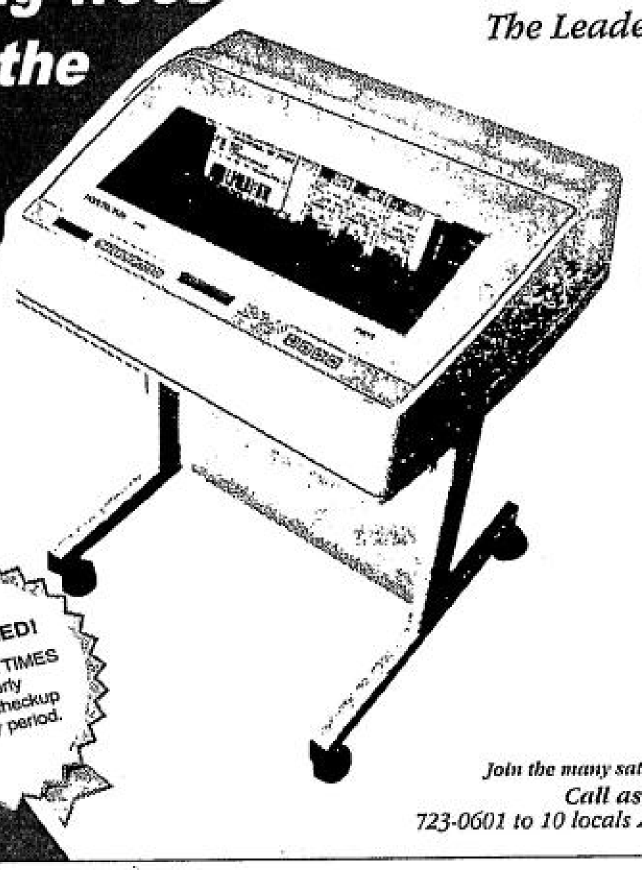

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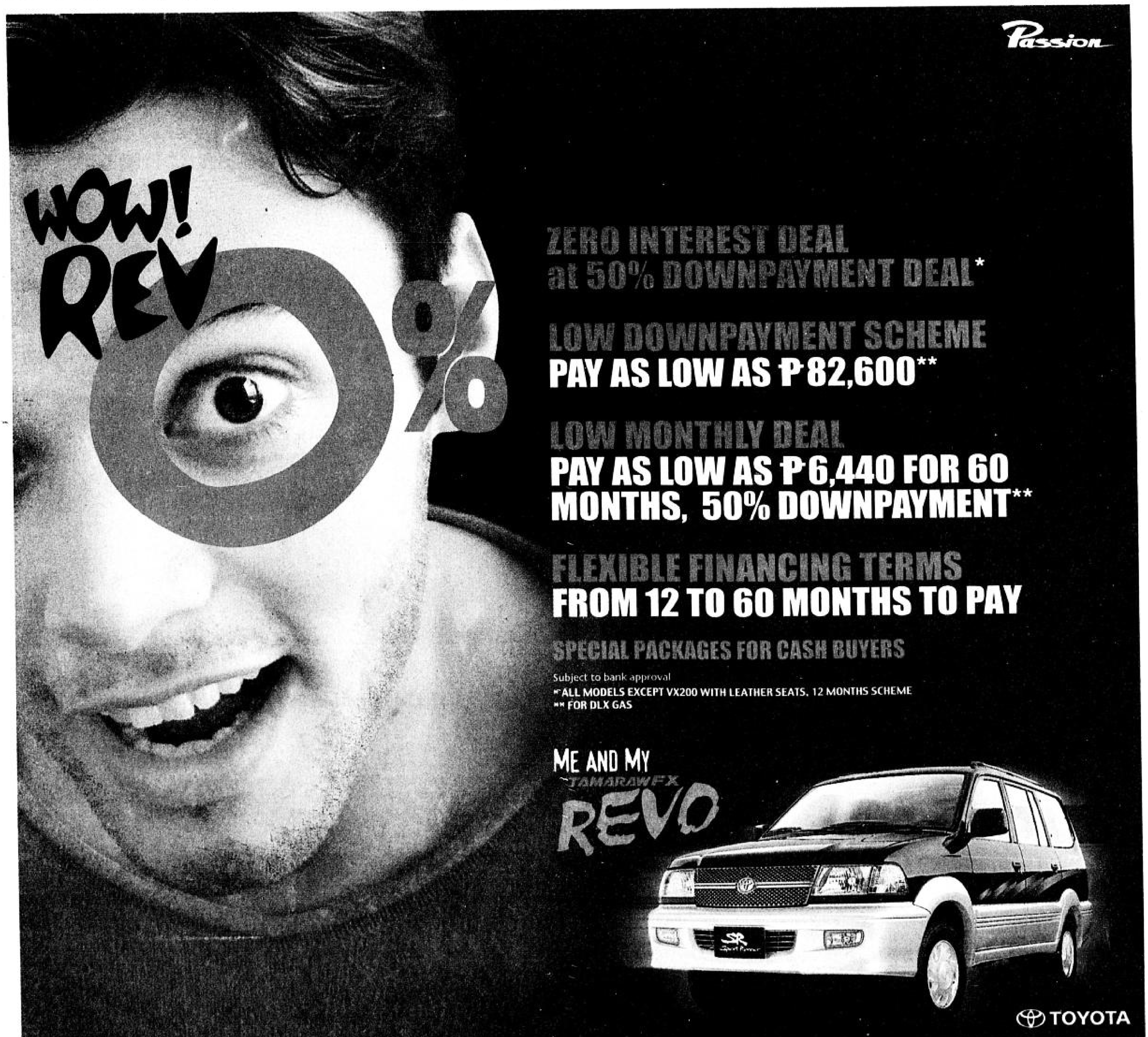

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Nestor G. Leynes, vanguard realist, holds retrospective

STORY ON PAGE D2

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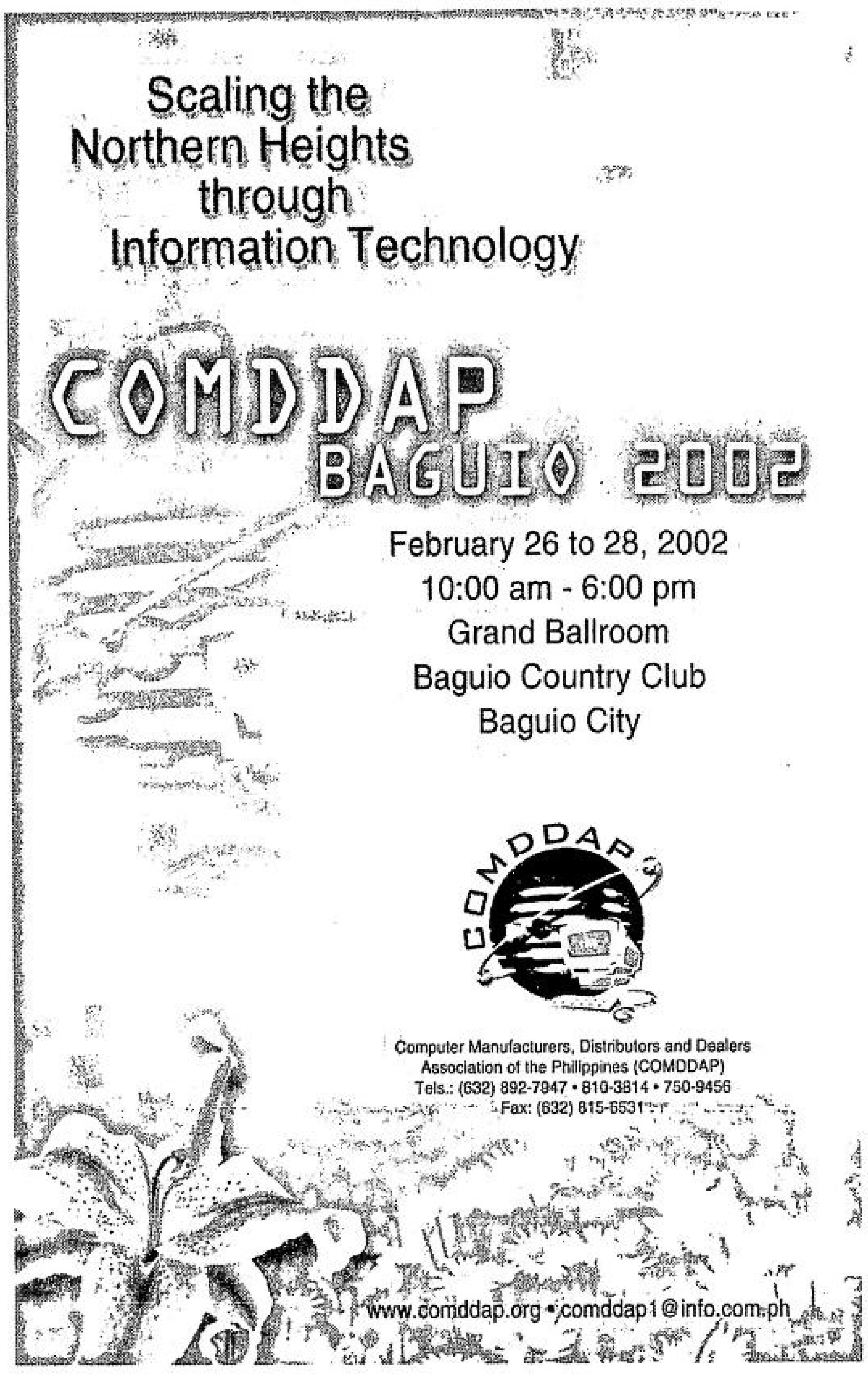

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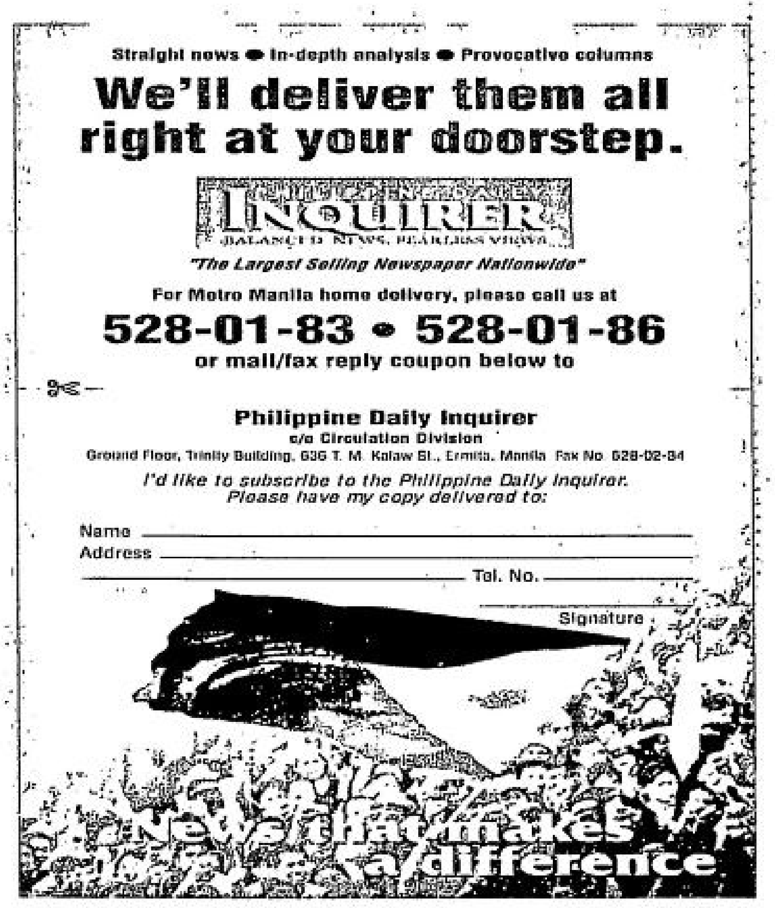

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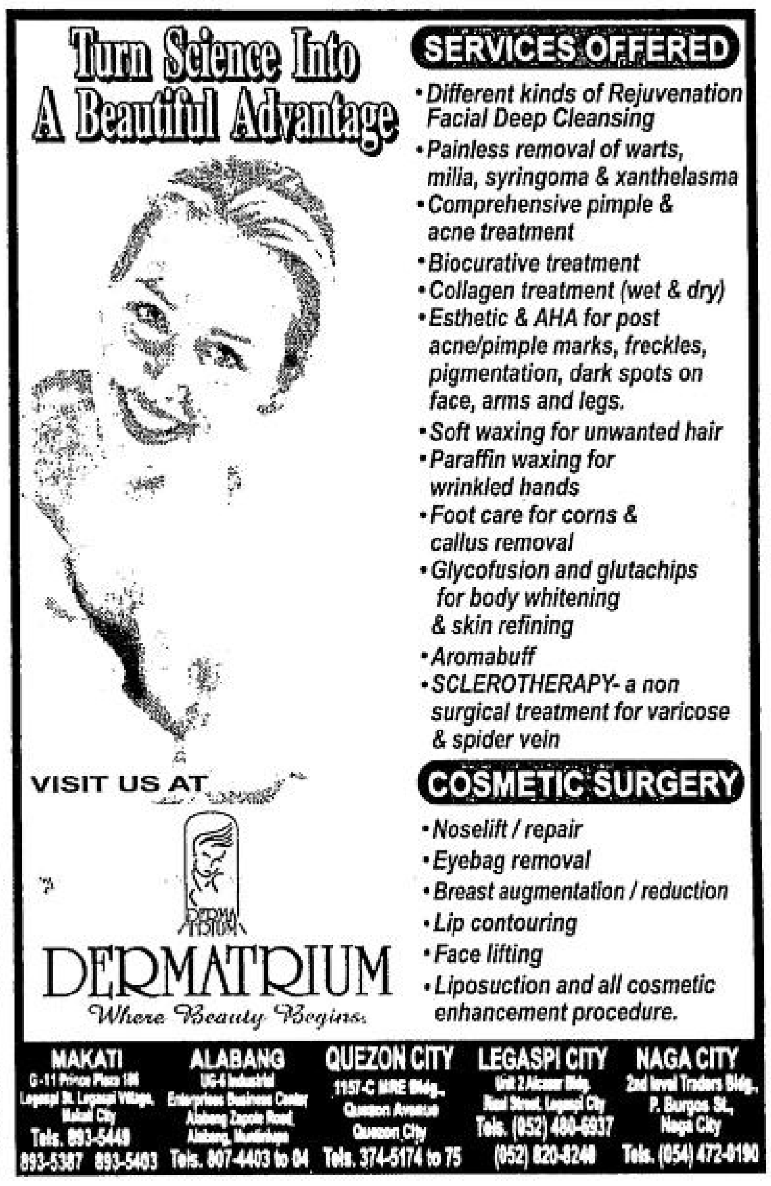

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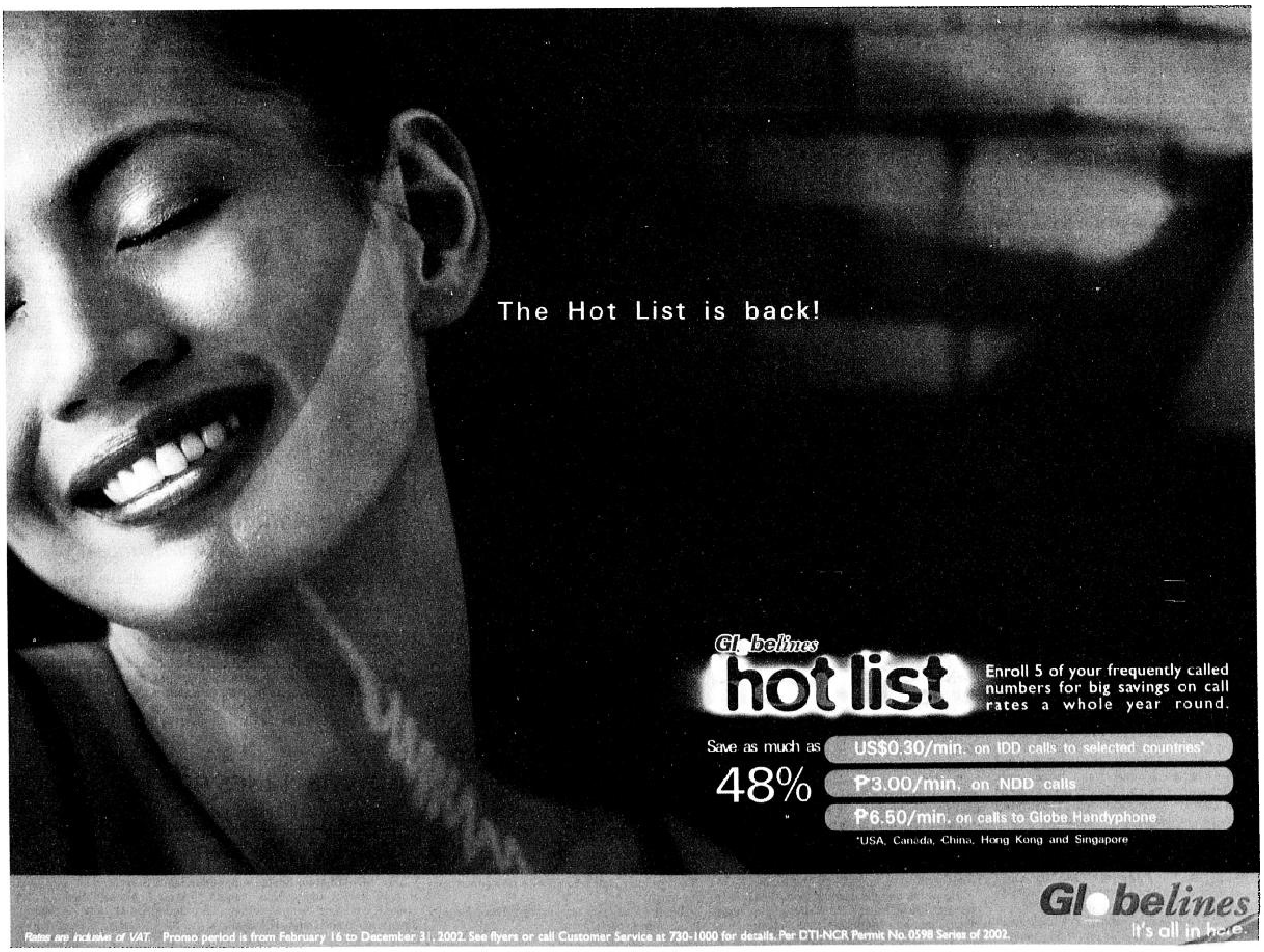

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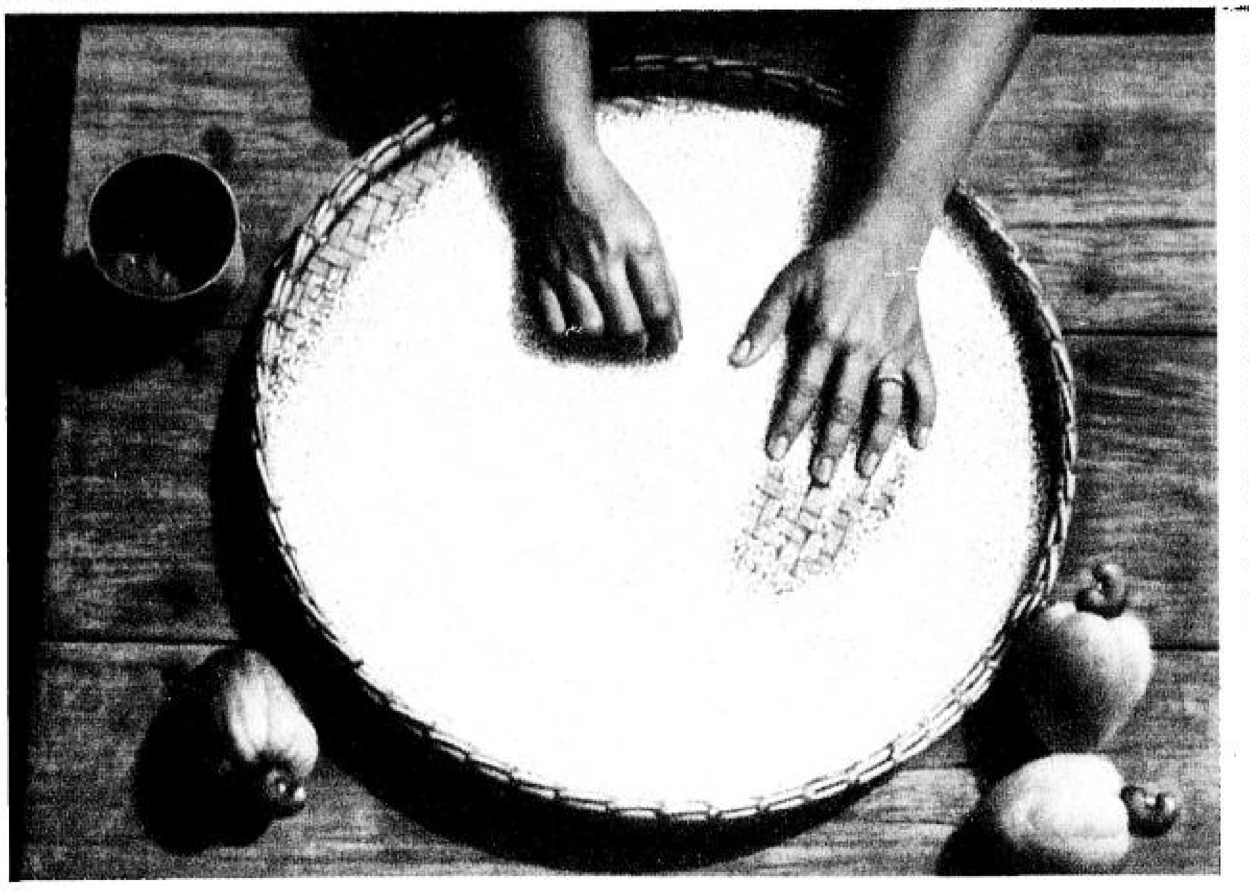
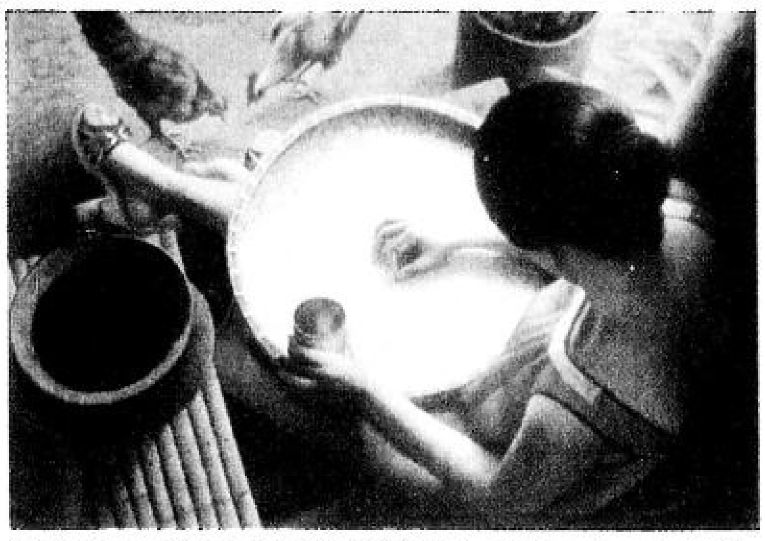


"BIGAS at Kasuy," 22" x 29", acrylic on board, 1996, from the Nori Maceda Leynes collection. It shows the trademark Leynes rice grains in all their exacting detail contrasted with the super-realistic rendering of the hands (one of them raking the grains, evincing movement), a can where discarded grains are placed, and cashew fruits (showing uncanny fleshy texture and contour). Note the composition and the perspective.



"PAGPILI ng Bigas sa Hagdan," 28"x40", acrylic on board, 1993, Nori Maceda Leynes collection. Well-framed and lovingly detailed. Note the *bakya* (wooden slipper) and its dainty decoration. Leynes survived the Second World War by making colorful *bakya*.

Nestor G. Leynes, vanguard realist, holds retrospective

By Lito B. Zulueta

A RETROSPECTIVE of the works of Nestor Leynes, the 80-year-old master realist, comes at a most auspicious moment. The new century has ushered in a pluralism of styles and approaches that has taken the heat out of the passionate artistic debates of the former century. There are no more ferocious disagreements on whether representational art can exist side by side with the non-representational, the "traditional" with the modern. Everything is accommodated to art's all-enfolding embrace.

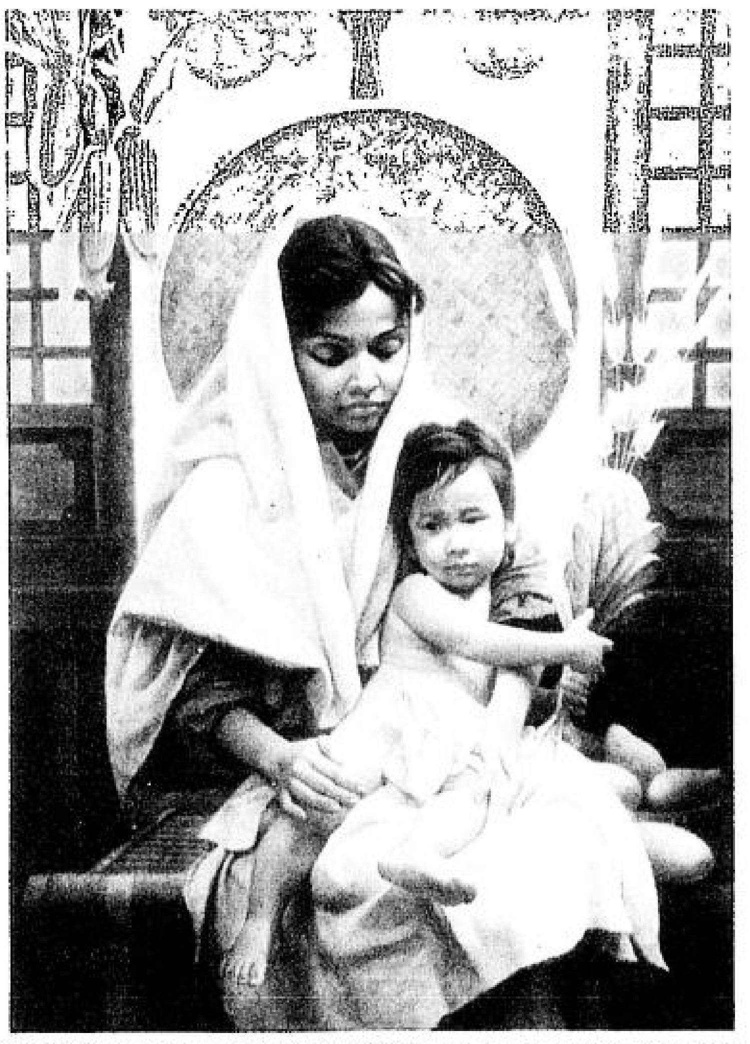
Leynes became the leader of the "Magic Realists" in the 1970s. It took him more than a generation since the war, which cut short his education at the UP School of Fine Arts, to come to his own and arrive at his unique style. In the interval, he painted in the Amorsolo vein, fell under the sway of Manansala, assisted Botong Francisco and Amadeo Manalad in murals, did illustration work at Liwayway, became creative director of J. Romero and Associates (which sadly does not have an archive of his creative works nor any archive, for that matter, as Leynes' son, Peewee, has discovered while assembling the retrospective), and in the 1970s, managed to get a curious work showing rice grains recorded in their most exacting detail purchased on the spot by Carlos Arguelles.

Word that his work had been bought by the great architect spread and Leynes was made. He had discovered his unique style. His first solo in 1977 became a cause celebre, with First Lady Imelda Marcos ordering the entire collection carted to Malacañang for viewing by her guest, David Rockefeller, who was a fan of the American realist Andrew Wyeth. Rockefeller bought two paintings while Imelda purchased several. When the Malacañang of the North was looted in the aftermath of Edsa 1986, Leynes' "Bigas" was among those pillaged.

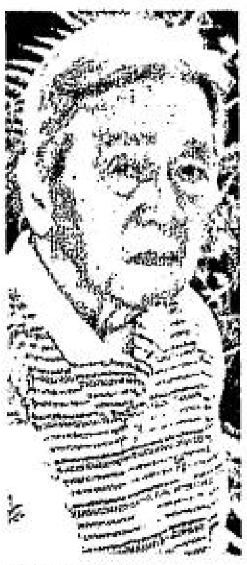
Leynes and company (Jaime Roque, Ger Viterbo, Joselito Barcelona and Emmanuel Llado) called themselves "magic realists." Obviously the label was inspired by the literary fashion sweeping the world at that time—the fantastic fiction of Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Amado. This was quite surprising since the more correct art-world term would have been "new realists." After all, the realism of the Leynes group was a reaction to the abstraction dominant at that time, as the art of Wyeth, Epse and Flack—and even the pop minimalism of Warhol who was basically a realist—were really reactions to the excesses of non-objective art forms.

Neglect

Despite his achievements, Leynes has suffered critical neglect all these years. You may think that a democracy of artistic modes has fostered a more welcoming climate for an artist like him who is relatively free from the abstruse and anguished intellectualism of abstract and non-objective art. But despite sold-out shows in the 1970s and 1980s, and having his share of assiduous collectors who would bid tens of thousands of pesos for his solider pieces, he remains a marginal figure as far as the salon-cum-carnival side of art is concerned.



"BROWN Madonna and Child," 48"x32", acrylic on canvas, 1983, from the Amalia A. Leynes collection. An indigenization of a classic western motif in the spirit of Galo Ocampo. This shows Leynes' graphic and pictorial gifts. The folds of the Madonna are contrasted with the soft, innocent flesh of the baby. The indigenization extends to the setting—the bare foliage and silhouette of the eaves on the background, the capiz windows that frame the two human figures, the *bilao* that acts as the spiritual halo (again, note the detailed rendition), and ominously enough, the *palaspas* (Palm Sunday fronds) held by the infant, prefiguring the Cross.



THE ARTIST

It is easy to determine the source of his peripheral standing. Ultra-academic theorizing has driven his art—classical in approach (although not unadulterated or insular, as we will learn), not wont to get lost in the thicket of collages and mixed media, much less in tangled heterogeneity—underground.

Both in subject matter and method, Leynes is considered by his detractors passé and unoriginal. For example, he draws many of his motifs from the Western tradition (Madonna and Child and the Christ, which he paints every Good Friday as a religious vow). As for method, the pictorial quality of his paintings has been derided just because of that—that they look like photographs because he paints them based on photographs he has taken. He does not deny this. In fact, he says he goes around with a camera to take shots of idylls and other scenes that will later on figure in his canvases. But he insists, "I just don't copy like a photograph." Everything is reordered, rearranged, re-created. "*Nasa utak ang lahat,*" he explains.

Photographic eye

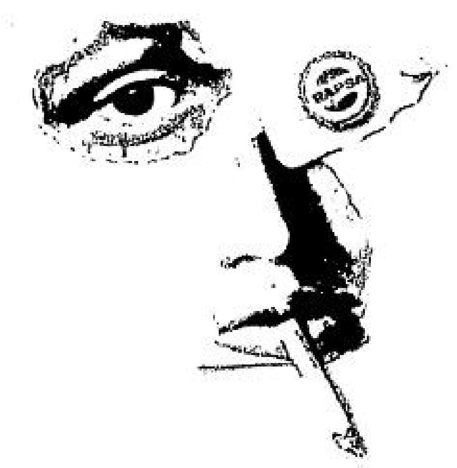
Even before a stroke last year compelled him to wear a heart pacer and made it doubly difficult for him to speak, Leynes had been a man of few words. He is not different from natural artists who cannot articulate and intellectualize their aesthetics. In fact, he has nothing to apologize for his approach. After all, the American realists in the last 20 years have developed techniques that use photographs both as a springboard to art and as a commentary on how photographic reality has displaced much of the reality as seen by the anatomical eye.

But Leynes departs from his Western counterparts on two counts. First, while Wyeth and other realists record prosaic Americana, Leynes records romantic visions of the Filipino campestral. Second, Leynes draws from his two decades of work in advertising, which explains his refusal to accept the charge that he "merely" draws what he photographs. For all their fidelity and quiddity, his works are well focused and laid out, like a storyboard. In fact, they achieve their striking quality by their artistic vantage points (Leynes loves to "shoot" a scene from above, like an aerial survey) and the well-appointed placement of details to complement and contrast with one another.

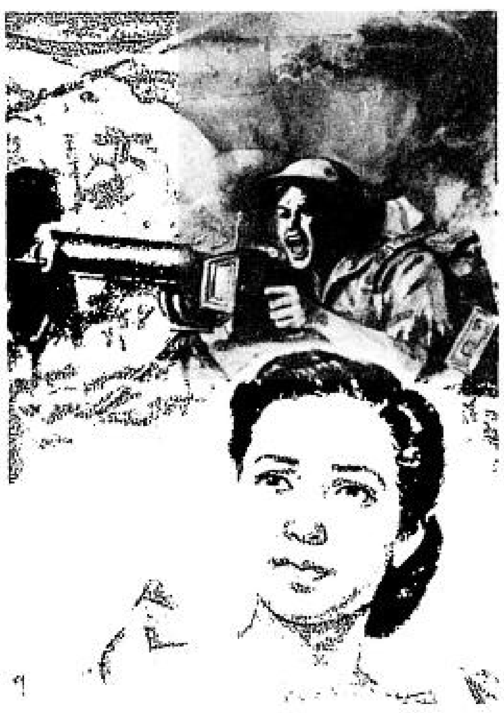
In the final analysis, it is easy to see how Leynes is different from his American counterparts. While the American realists force their viewers to discover the banality of modern life, Leynes the realist, using the banality of photographic technology and the advertising arts, to craft meticulous works that throb with the immediacy and ordinariness of beauty.

It is unfortunate that he is called a magic realist because the term is a western nomenclature of what is perceived to be fantastic fiction, fantastic art. To the Latin American fictionists, there's nothing fantastic about the Latin American physical and social geography; they are merely writing about ordinary events that appear fantastic to westerners. Ditto with Leynes. If there's an element of the fantastic in his works, it is in the craft.

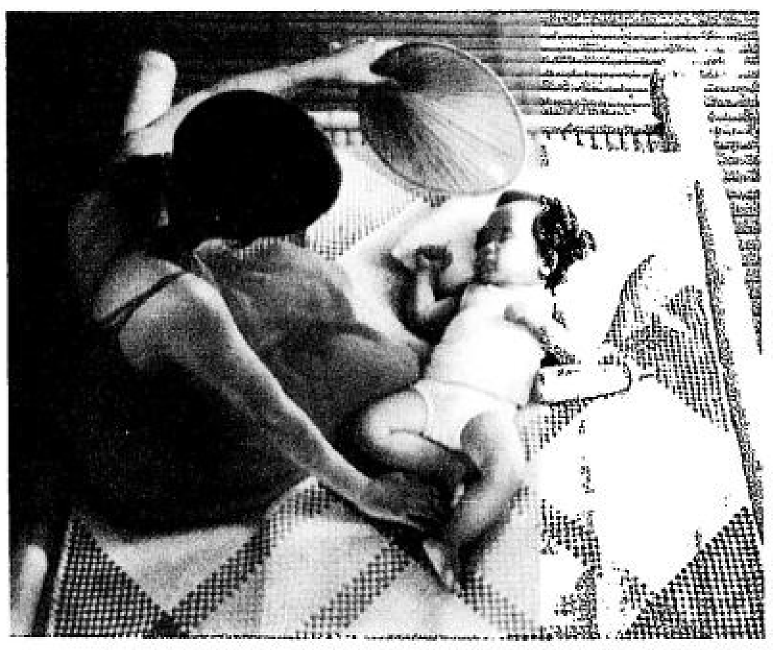
"At 80: The Nestor G. Leynes, Magic Realist, Retrospective" will open on Feb. 22 at the RCBC Plaza, Makati. Opening cocktails at 6 p.m. Call 461-3522 and 939-8972.



"CANCER," 10"x8", tempera on illustration board, 1969, from the Dick and Josie Baldovino collection. A triumph of trompe l'oeil. The viewer can almost touch the ragged pieces of paper. The composition and the surreal spirit obviously draw from Dali.



LEYNES' watercolor illustration for Gervacio B. Santiago's novel "Pag-ibig sa Bandila" in the July 12, 1954 issue of Liwayway. The realistic spirit was already thriving—disciplined by the narrative demand of fictional illustration.



"MAG-INA sa Duyan," 30"x40", acrylic on board, 1995, from the Frankie and Lorna Zabala collection. Aside from the lovingly rendered human figures and the spectacularly etched minutiae of the *banig* (palm mat), the work is a subtle study in light and shadow. Note the delicate bar of light cast on the bed.

ART TART

They paint horses, don't they?

I WAS singing **Kiri Te Kanawa** to my lush garden of rare *santan* on that gloomy Valentine afternoon when a familiar smell suddenly stopped me mid-aria. I looked under my new pair of Islanders and saw—Madre **Mia Borromeo**!—horseshit.

Suddenly, like **Proust**'s madeleine, the sight brought back a flood of memories. I switched to the head-to-toe **Michael Kors** equestrienne look I got from Virra Mall and galloped my way to Glorietta 4 to catch an exhibit on horses.

What is it about the Chinese and horses? They love them the same way OFWs love Last Supper Portrait-designed Persian carpets from…Persia. I mean, every Binondo living room has them! But the ones on exhibit were so different and happy, **Tessie Ang See** would *kidnap and kill* to have them.

The collection was called "Ma" which the shop girl said was also "Happy New Year" in Chinese calligraphy. The artists' names were, incidentally, **Wilson "Ma"** and **Jerome "Ma"lic**. Oh, I loved those puns! And the works, they were so colorful, your kids would love them.

They had horses in a carousel. A horse *tumba-tumba*. A unicorn astride a horse. A horse surrounded by eight horseshoes. And my favorite, two brothers playing horsey.

But you know what your kids might like even more? The ink-on-paper horses—which they could color any which way they want.

Before long, I heard an *amiga* introduce me to **Robert Alejandro,** who himself used to draw horses on recycled paper. Do you remember him? He put the "ro" in Papemelroti.

"This is **Art Tart**, she loooves horses," she said. He asked me sincerely: "What is it about you and horses?" And so I began my tale.

"I was 8 when I first fell in love. He was my first crush. His name was Blessing in the Skies. He was a bold-jumping, front-running Arabian Thoroughbred but, like me, he lived in the wrong side of Herran—me in Sta. Ana, he in the Sta. Ana Race Tracks.

"We met on Sundays when my *madrasta* would bring all her week's earnings from collecting *tong* to bet on Blessing in the Skies' stablemate.

"He would nod his head as soon as he sensed me from the bleachers. He was so sweet. And I would tease him about his name. I mean, it was sooo long. And you know what they say about long names…

"But that one never came up to anything. One morning, after I removed Blessing in the Skies' blinders and he saw me for the first time, he kicked me so hard I landed straight in the PGH emergency room. Ten years later, who would have thought that I could fall in love again and even get married? What luck, he turned out to be a stallion…in bed."

Robert almost choked on his Haw Flakes—which I first thought was salami—and wondered whether to laugh or cry. I offered him the free iced mint tea and the Goya—not the artist, but the Chinese chocolate—on the buffet table. He asked me what I thought about the Ma exhibit. I had only one word: "*Ma.*"

As I reached for my riding whip, ready to ride on my saddle, he had another question: "What is your real name, Art Tart?" I bristled and replied: "Oh, sweetie, I am a horse with no name. Hear me neigh!"

Want to ride, er, out-tart Art Tart? E-mail arttart@trust-me.com

---

Doronila book on Estrada downfall to be launched

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will be the guest of honor when the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER and Anvil Publishing launch "The Fall of Joseph Estrada: The Inside Story" by Amando Doronila on Feb. 21, at 5:30 p.m., at the Manila Polo Club.

Also to be launched is "Between Fires: Fifteen Perspectives on the Estrada Crisis," edited by Doronila.

Doronila writes the popular Analysis column in the INQUIRER and is widely considered one of the sharpest political pundits in the country. He has a master's degree from Monash University in Australia and has written scholarly papers and books. A previous book on the Philippine state was published by the Oxford University Press.

'Ravens' takes off

ANVIL Publishing Inc. and Powerbooks will launch "Ravens in Love," edited by literary and visual artist Hilario S. Francia, at 6 tonight at Powerbooks, Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City.

"Ravens in Love" includes the works of Pacifico N. Aprieto, Armando F. Bonifacio, Romulo L. Chua, Adrian E. Cristobal, Andres Cristobal Cruz, Rony V. Diaz, Morli Dharam, Silvino V. Epistola, Hilario S. Francia, Alejandrino G. Hufana, Raul R. Ingles, Nick Joaquin, Virginia R. Moreno, Nick Nicolas, Elmer A. Ordoñez, Nefaric de Pagsanjan, Godofredo M. Roperos, Maro L. Santaromana and Danny H. Vilanueva.

TEENAGE artist Camille de la Rosa

Colors paint a tribute to a patch of paradise

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

AN ARTIST with an all-too-consuming passion for nature and its exaltation, Camille de la Rosa has, in this new suite of oil paintings, once again delved into the subject of garden-habitats. It is, of course, a subject that she has continually and tirelessly pursued in her previous exhibitions, perhaps a way of documenting her direct experience with nature, where the natural order and her vision coincide. Her latest show, "Nature's Symphony" (until the 21st at Gallery 828, Shangri-La Plaza), pays tribute to the patch of paradise conjured by the well-tended gardens of well-known art patron Gretchen Cojuangco, which are located in the Cojuangco's sprawling New Manila residence, as well as in their provincial arcadia in both the Mt. Arsal farm and Balbina mansion in Pontevedra, Negros province.

Having been so graciously invited to visit these sites, De La Rosa was both enthralled and challenged by the unique possibilities that these trips offered. No one, not even among older and more experienced artists, was perhaps as lucky as she to have come intimately close to the corridors (rather, gardens) of power that the Cojuangco family conjures.

Joy to behold

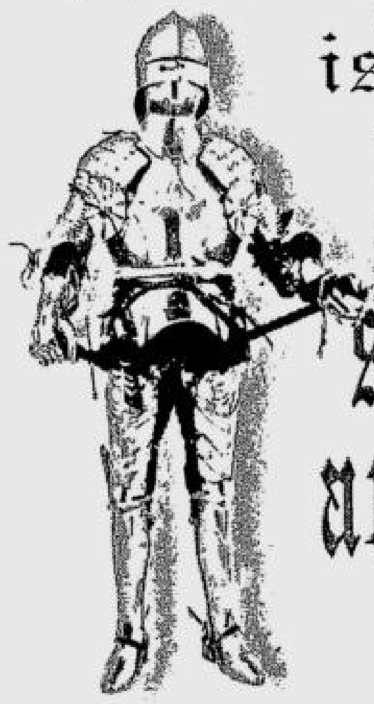
The Balete Gardens were admittedly a joy to behold, as these paintings attest—a lush, if luscious, tropical setting, which offers sanctuary in the midst of the pollution-weary metropolis. Philodendrons, ferns of all shapes and stripes, ginger plants, anthuriums and other such exotica—all these she has transmuted on her canvases in the neo-impressionist style with her trademark pointilistic daubs.

Even though bereft of colors, these predominantly monochromatic landscapes stir the viewer to life with their asymmetrical arrangements, the sea of leaves awash in a crescendo of sunlight.

Turning a more encompassing view of *nature* with her renderings of both the Mt. Araal and Balbina farms, De la Rosa zeroes in on the larger ecosystems, with her aesthetic agenda intact, that mother nature has so generously provided. Here, the configuration is one of total harmony: earth, water, plant life, sky.

In "Misty Mowing Series I," a man-made pond shows the Zen-

COLORS/ p.D5



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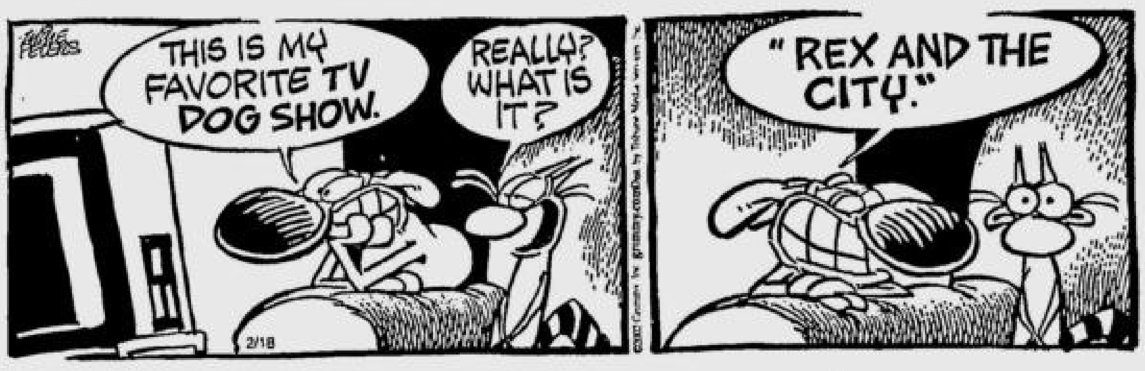
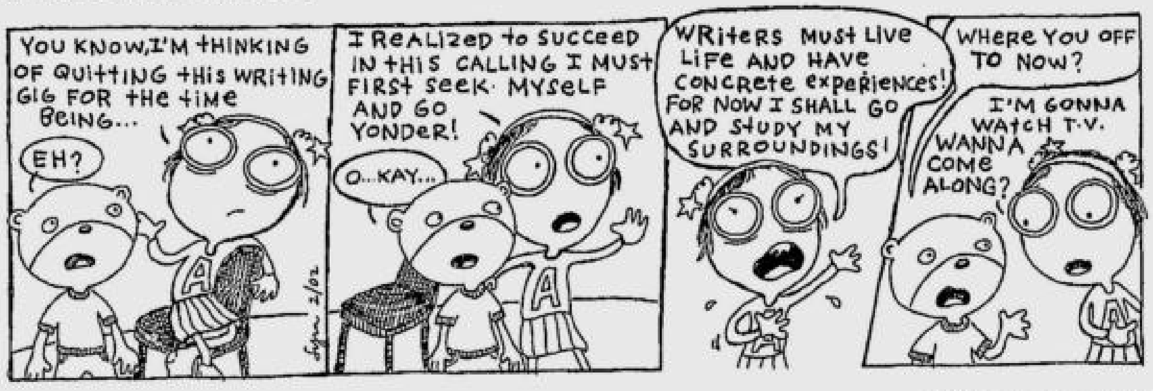
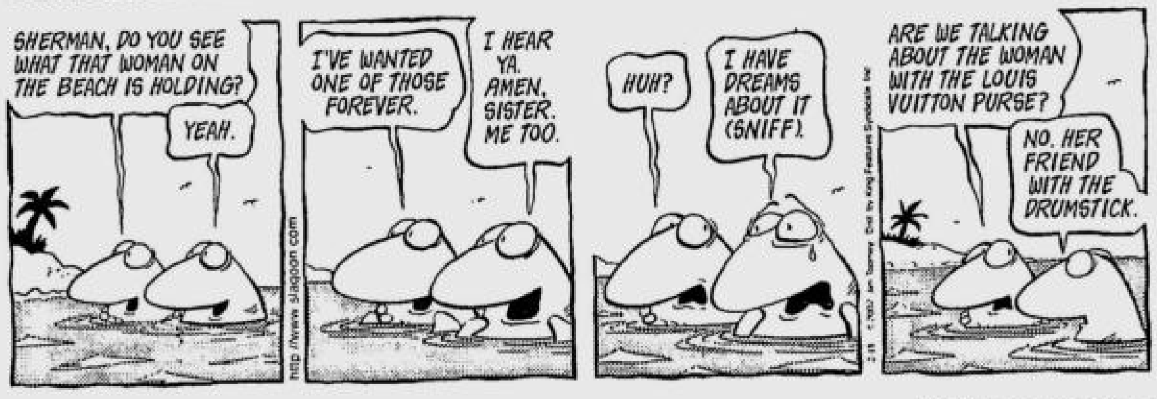
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


THIS IS MY FAVORITE TV DOG SHOW.
REALLY? WHAT IS IT?
"REX AND THE CITY."
2/18

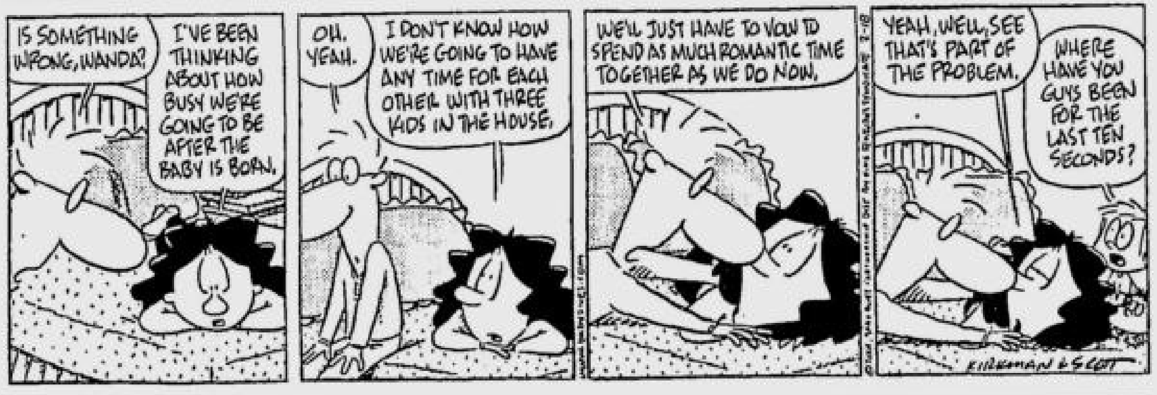
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU KNOW, I'M THINKING OF QUITTING THIS WRITING GIG FOR THE TIME BEING...
EH?
I REALIZED TO SUCCEED IN THIS CALLING I MUST FIRST SEEK MYSELF AND GO YONDER!
O...KAY...
WRITERS MUST LIVE LIFE AND HAVE CONCRETE EXPERIENCES! FOR NOW I SHALL GO AND STUDY MY SURROUNDINGS!
WHERE YOU OFF TO NOW?
I'M GONNA WATCH T.V. WANNA COME ALONG?

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


SHERMAN, DO YOU SEE WHAT THAT WOMAN ON THE BEACH IS HOLDING?
YEAH.
I'VE WANTED ONE OF THOSE FOREVER.
I HEAR YA. AMEN, SISTER. ME TOO.
HUH?
I HAVE DREAMS ABOUT IT (SNIFF).
ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE WOMAN WITH THE LOUIS VUITTON PURSE?
NO. HER FRIEND WITH THE DRUMSTICK.

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


IS SOMETHING WRONG, WANDA?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW BUSY WE'RE GOING TO BE AFTER THE BABY IS BORN.
OH. YEAH.
I DON'T KNOW HOW WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ANY TIME FOR EACH OTHER WITH THREE KIDS IN THE HOUSE.
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO VOW TO SPEND AS MUCH ROMANTIC TIME TOGETHER AS WE DO NOW.
YEAH, WELL, SEE THAT'S PART OF THE PROBLEM.
WHERE HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN FOR THE LAST TEN SECONDS?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Vanna White, Yoko Ono, Matt Dillon, John Travolta

Happy Birthday: You will be looking into the more obscure philosophies this year. Don't get fooled into believing that you must follow someone else in order to be enlightened. You must believe in yourself in order to move ahead in a positive manner. Your numbers are 4, 16 , 21, 27, 33, 38

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You've got added energy, so pick up the slack and put in some overtime. Don't depend on getting help today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Expect someone around you to take things the wrong way. Be careful how you word things. Don't leave yourself open for someone to twist your words or make you look bad.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't just sit there, get busy wheeling and dealing. Property investments or small business ventures will be to your advantage.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take part in something that is important to you. If you don't take part in the things you enjoy, you will miss out on the possibility of a new partnership.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Be careful to whom you tell your ideas. Someone will be quick to pick your brain and steal your game plan.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can have it all if you take advantage of an opportunity involving a creative project. Your creative talents will capture the interest of those watching from the sidelines.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You've got the upper hand so don't procrastinate. Take care of all the small but important details. Don't get involved in non-productive group endeavors.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may have trouble figuring out what others are trying to do. If you are getting double signals, don't back away. Ask point-blank questions to satisfy your own mind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Put all your efforts into getting ahead at work. Roll up your shirtsleeves and don't stop until the job is done. Your colleagues will be more then happy to lend you a hand.

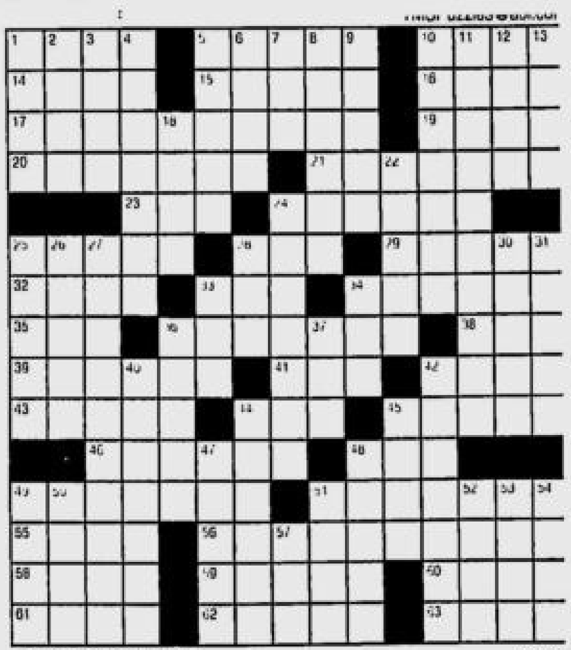
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't be rigid. You have some wonderful creative ideas, so don't be afraid to put them on the table and see what others think.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You are probably sending the wrong message to someone you like. You may want to step back and observe others for a while instead of making all the moves.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't forget about the friends who have always been in your corner. Loyalty counts for a lot and the people you can depend on are the ones you should be spending time with.

Birthday Baby: You are completely open and receptive to new ideas and concepts. You are not easily surprised by anything you see or hear. You will often play in your own little world, content to entertain yourself.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
1/2/0

ACROSS
1 Closed hand
5 Stop
10 Support
14 Diva's song
15 Harder to find
16 Jot
17 Hoss on "Bonanza"
19 Tooth's companion?
20 Pool spin
21 Kin of a son of a gun
23 Ames and Asner
24 Sauce for fish
25 IOUs
28 Down in the dumps
29 Eye: pref.
32 Cassowary kin
33 Ribbon knot
34 Fullness
35 Spasm
36 Disney dwarf
38 Compass pt.
39 Town in KY and MD
41 Psychic's power
42 Connery or Penn
43 Discharge a debt
44 Seine substance
45 Cat sounds
46 Go up
48 Moving camera shot
49 Six-line stanzas
51 With a leg on each side of
55 Otherwise
56 Highway pedestrian
58 Contender
59 Actress Verdugo
60 Dates regularly
61 Corn units
62 Make fresh
63 Salinger lass

DOWN
1 Lose luster
2 Persia, today
3 Warble
4 Pills
5 Out of sorts
6 To __ his own
7 Noah's construction
8 Waver
9 Blunder
10 Small sailing boat
11 Chaparral bird
12 Elevator name
13 __ Alto, CA
18 Covers
22 Coral isle
24 Whitish blond
25 Discourage
26 French writer Zola
27 1966 Horse of the Year
28 Spanish article
30 Type of calendar
31 Auguries
33 Prohibition
34 Young dog
36 British composer William
37 Tallahassee sch.
40 Samplers
42 Daily genesis
44 Store fodder
45 Trodden track
47 Old knockout gas
48 Shucks!
49 Ballesteros of golf
50 Lamb's pen name
51 Skin problem
52 Turner and Clanton
53 View as
54 Highland Gaelic
57 Decimal base

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	A	S	S	■	A	C	E	D	■	O	G	H	A	M
O	R	E	O	■	C	O	L	A	■	S	H	A	P	E
S	E	E	M	■	T	B	A	R	■	H	E	I	S	T
T	A	K	E	D	O	W	N	T	H	E	T	R	E	E
■	■	■	T	O	R	E	■	■	O	A	T	■	■	■
R	E	S	I	N	■	B	U	R	G	■	O	M	S	K
A	N	I	M	U	S	■	N	C	A	A	■	A	H	A
C	U	R	E	T	H	E	H	A	N	G	O	V	E	R
E	R	E	■	S	E	R	A	■	S	O	V	I	E	T
S	E	N	D	■	A	R	T	A	■	R	E	N	T	S
■	■	■	E	S	T	■	■	L	E	A	N	■	■	■
V	I	E	W	T	H	E	R	O	S	E	B	O	W	L
E	D	D	I	E	■	S	I	N	S	■	I	D	E	E
A	L	D	E	R	■	M	A	Z	E	■	R	O	A	N
L	E	A	R	N	■	E	L	O	N	■	D	R	N	O

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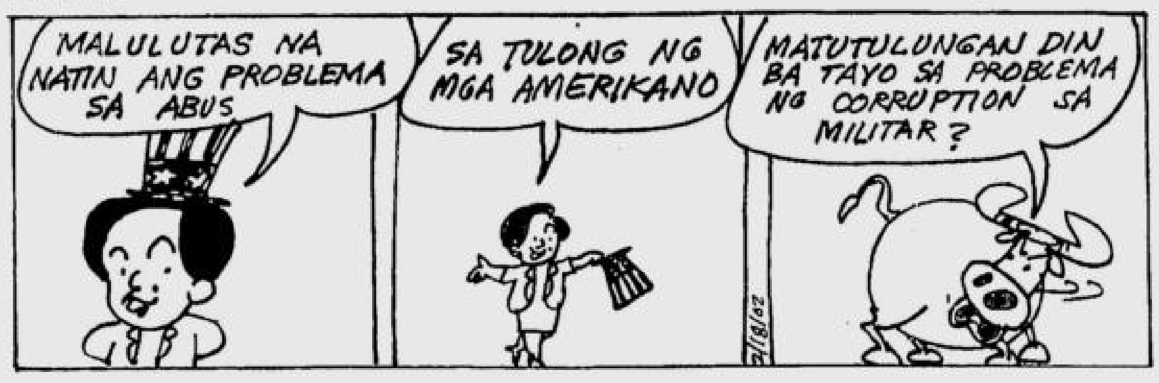
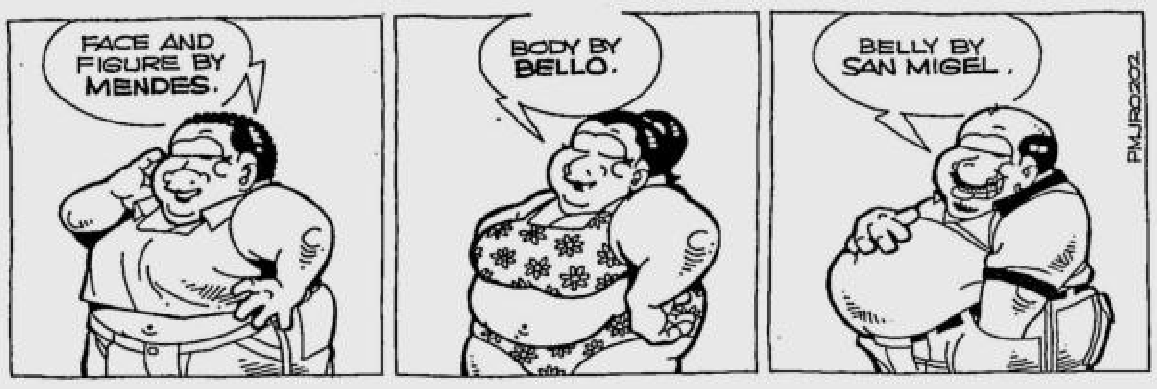
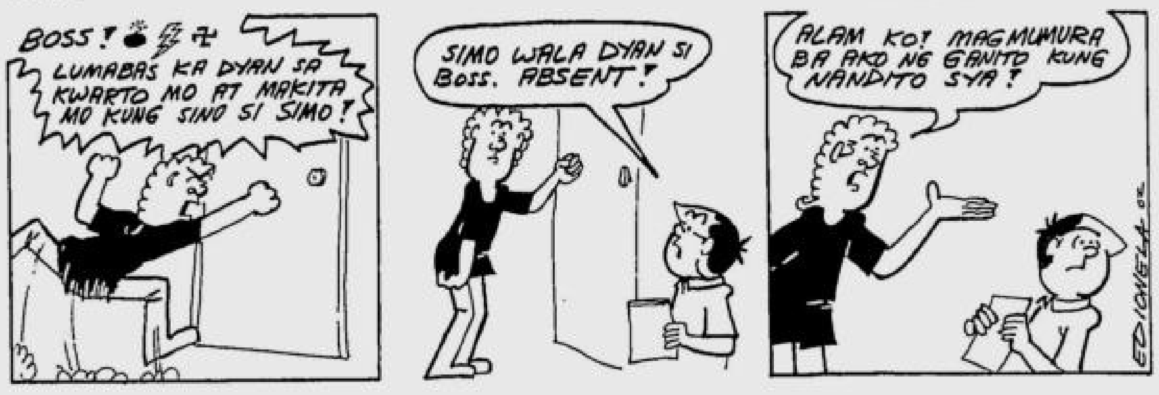
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MALULUTAS NA NATIN ANG PROBLEMA SA ABUS
SA TULONG NG MGA AMERIKANO
MATUTULUNGAN DIN BA TAYO SA PROBLEMA NG CORRUPTION SA MILITAR?
2/18/02

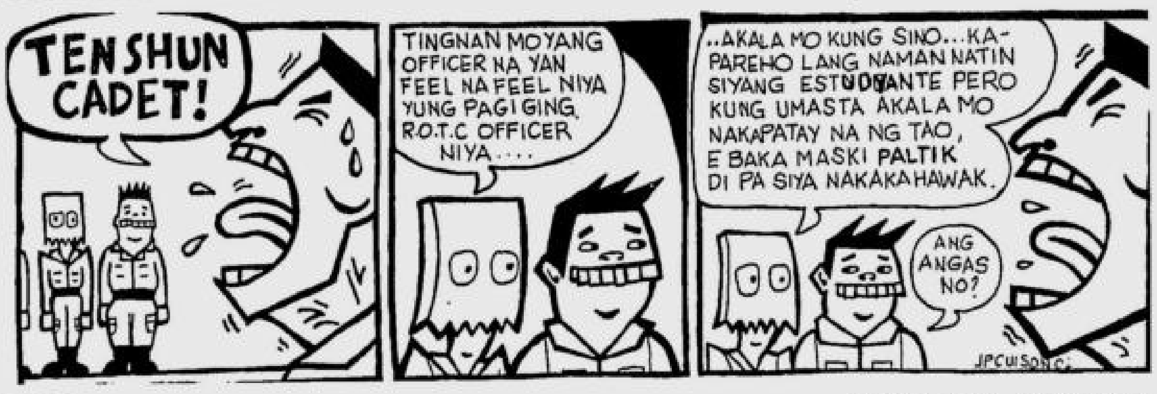
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


FACE AND FIGURE BY MENDES.
BODY BY BELLO.
BELLY BY SAN MIGEL.
PMJR0202

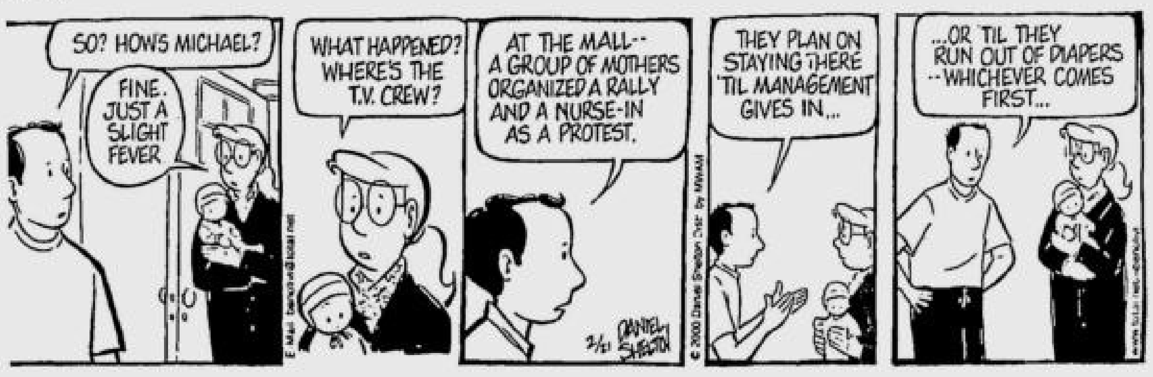
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


BOSS!
LUMABAS KA DYAN SA KWARTO MO AT MAKITA MO KUNG SINO SI SIMO!
SIMO WALA DYAN SI BOSS. ABSENT!
ALAM KO! MAGMUMURA BA AKO NG GANITO KUNG NANDITO SYA?
EDIONELA

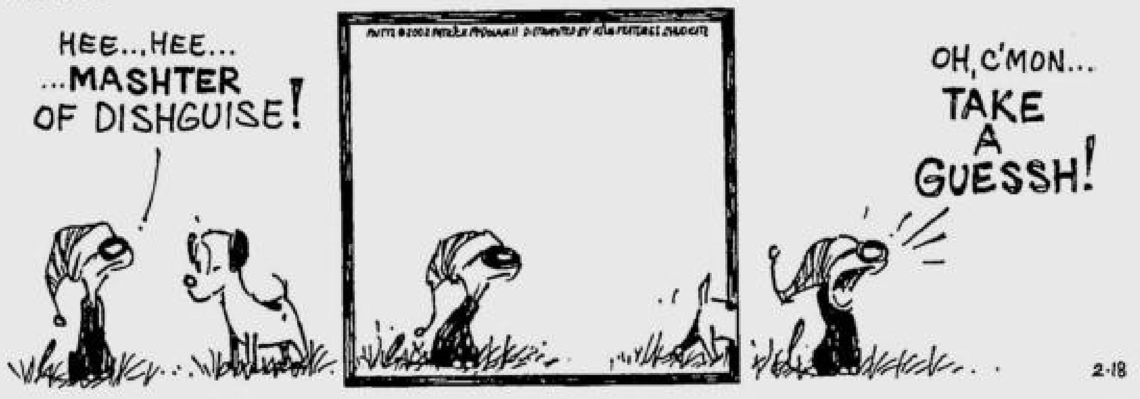
GARAPATA BLOOD BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


TENSHUN CADET!
TINGNAN MO YANG OFFICER NA YAN FEEL NA FEEL NIYA YUNG PAGIGING R.O.T.C OFFICER NIYA....
..AKALA MO KUNG SINO...KA-PAREHO LANG NAMAN NATIN SIYANG ESTUDYANTE PERO KUNG UMASTA AKALA MO NAKAPATAY NA NG TAO, E BAKA MASKI PALTIK DI PA SIYA NAKAKAHAWAK.
ANG ANGAS NO?
JPCUISON

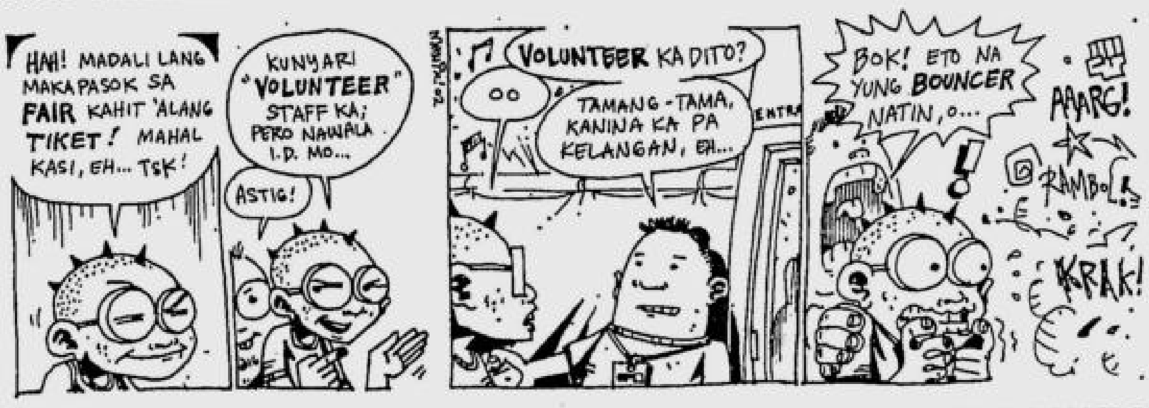
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO? HOW'S MICHAEL?
FINE. JUST A SLIGHT FEVER
WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE'S THE T.V. CREW?
AT THE MALL-- A GROUP OF MOTHERS ORGANIZED A RALLY AND A NURSE-IN AS A PROTEST.
THEY PLAN ON STAYING THERE 'TIL MANAGEMENT GIVES IN...
...OR 'TIL THEY RUN OUT OF DIAPERS --WHICHEVER COMES FIRST...
DANIEL SHELTON

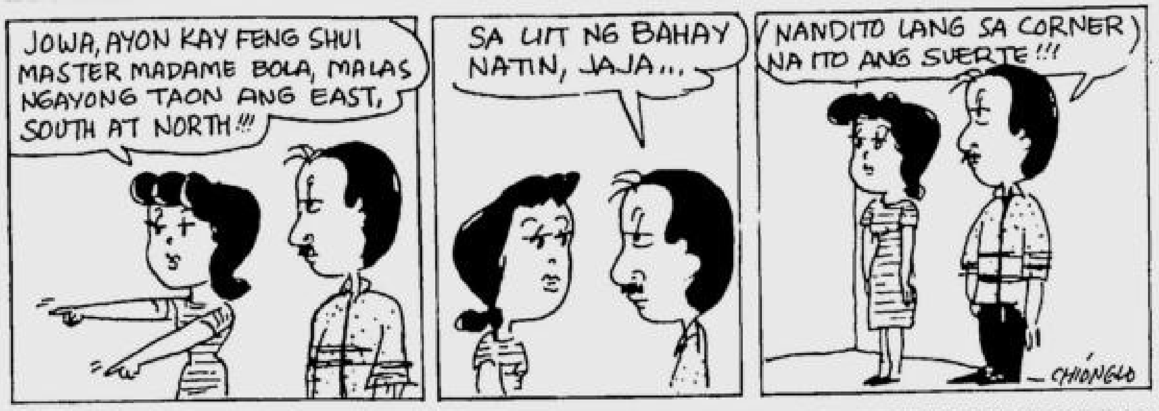
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEE...HEE... ...MASHTER OF DISHGUISE!
OH, C'MON... TAKE A GUESSH!
2-18

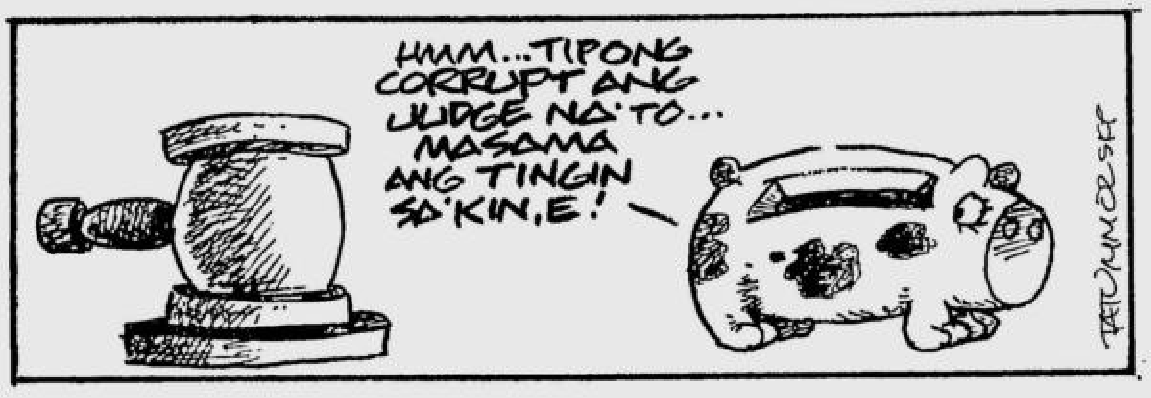
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

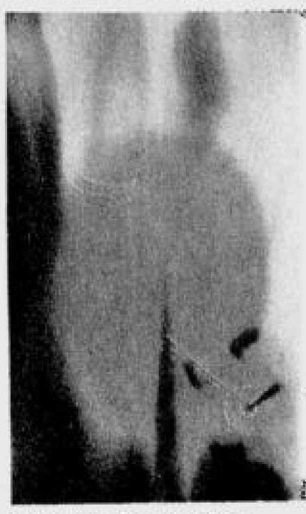

HAH! MADALI LANG MAKAPASOK SA FAIR KAHIT 'ALANG TIKET! MAHAL KASI, EH... TSK!
KUNYARI "VOLUNTEER" STAFF KA; PERO NAWALA I.D. MO...
ASTIG!
VOLUNTEER KA DITO?
TAMANG-TAMA, KANINA KA PA KELANGAN, EH...
ENTRA
BOK! ETO NA YUNG BOUNCER NATIN, O...
AAARG!
RAMBOL!
KRAK!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

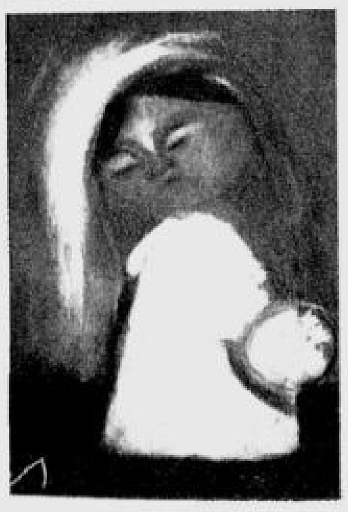

JOWA, AYON KAY FENG SHUI MASTER MADAME BOLA, MALAS NGAYONG TAON ANG EAST, SOUTH AT NORTH!!!
SA LIIT NG BAHAY NATIN, JAJA...
NANDITO LANG SA CORNER NA ITO ANG SUERTE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HMM...TIPONG CORRUPT ANG JUDGE NA'TO... MASAMA ANG TINGIN SA'KIN, E!



"SUNTOK sa Buwan," watercolor on paper, by Yveese J. Belen at Gallery Nine



"ANG HULING Hiling," oil on canvas, by Romeo R. Forbes, at Gallery Nine

Sabado at Hiraya, Belen and Forbes at Nine, Moss at West, Valencia at 139

VISUAL ARTS

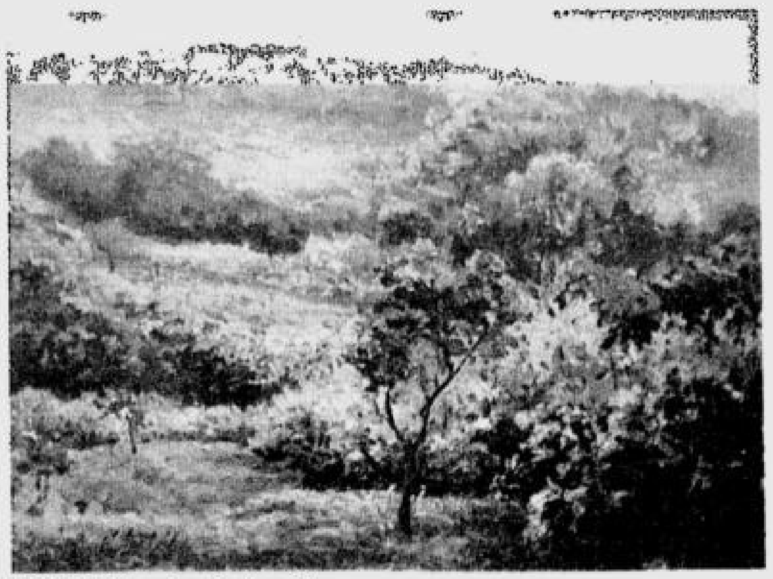
JOHN Frank Sabado is holding his fourth solo exhibit, "Pathways," at Hiraya Gallery (530 United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila) until March 8. The collection is a blend of the indigenous and contemporary, the material and spiritual. The mural opens the door to his ancestral world, the world of Cordillera's past. Call 523-3331.

BELEN AND FORBES AT GALLERY NINE. "Harana," a joint exhibit of award-winning young artists Yveese J. Belen and Romeo R. Forbes Jr., is showing until Feb. 25 at Gallery Nine (SM Megamall).

MOSS AT WEST GALLERY. "Apologies Before Sinking," an exhibit of eight pastels by Jason Moss, opens at the West Gallery (4/L, Building A, SM Megamall) on Feb. 21. The exhibit runs until March 5. Call 634-1284.

GROUP EXHIBIT. Large-scale paintings, mixed-media works and installations featuring realistically rendered images of boxes, tarnished silverware, clouds, skies and fossils in amber are included in "Trapdoors and False Bottoms," an exhibit of recent works by Marina Cruz, Butch Estandarte, Bonacoeli Guerzon, Lui Medina, Let Pascua, Grace Tenorio and Paulo Vinluan. The exhibit opens Feb. 22 and runs until March 8 at West Gallery (48 West Avenue, QC).

VALENCIA AT GALLERY 139. Juan C. Valencia Jr. is exhibiting "Watercolor and Acrylic Impressions" at Gallery 139 (4/F, SM Megamall until Feb. 25. The exhibit includes original paintings of luminous landscapes featuring sparkling water and lush foliage bathed by effervescent light.



"MISTY Morning Series 2"

Colors paint a tribute . . .

From page D3

like orchestration of seeming disparate elements, the scene aptly framed by weeping widows, and lotus flowers occupying center stage. The scene is replicated in "Serenity," where one's sight is led to the very end of the badge firmly rooted on earth.

The majesty of shrubs a-bloom in summer is depicted in "Bougainvillea in Bloom," where three stately varieties of these flowering plants stand side by side in the frame, in a kind of dynamic and symbiotic configuration.

The Cojuangco farm in Pontevedra, with its collection of rare plant species, is truly a gardener's haven. In "Misty Morning Series 2," a cornucopia of plants wakes up to the early morning's call, exuding the fragrance of wild lavender and hibiscus.

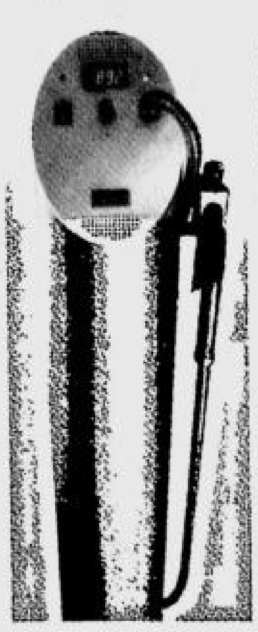
Intimate

A number of the paintings were inspired by views of the Coree Park in Sydney, Australia, where the Cojuangcos maintain a stud farm and plantation, a concession perhaps to their owners' parallel diversions. Inspired mainly by photographs taken around these sites, the painting reveal highly intimate images of nooks and crannies of the property.

Australia's topography is of course markedly different from that of the Philippines, where the primal landscape is subsumed by the green color. But what is indeed surprising is that De La Rosa based her work on available photographs supplied her. She is of course no stranger to the technique (as do most artists today) but, even with sight unseen, she nonetheless delivered a suite that captures these places as intimately as the rest of her works. (One would not even have detected the difference.)

The works of Camille de la Rosa, who is just turning 19, show the vibrancy of youth, as she hurdles the formidable challenge of painting fast-vanishing scenes of nature today from a deeply internalized seniority. But, given the obstacles that could have compromised her eye and brush, the artist, indeed so young yet so gifted, has indelibly captured these scenes of gardens and promenades prescribed within the given space of the city and the country's topography.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com.



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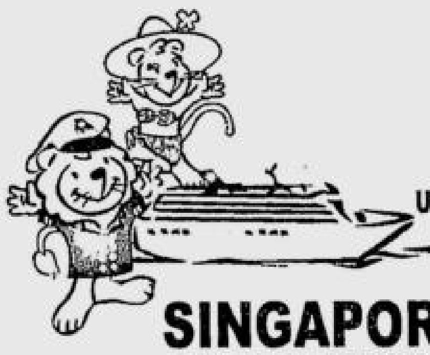

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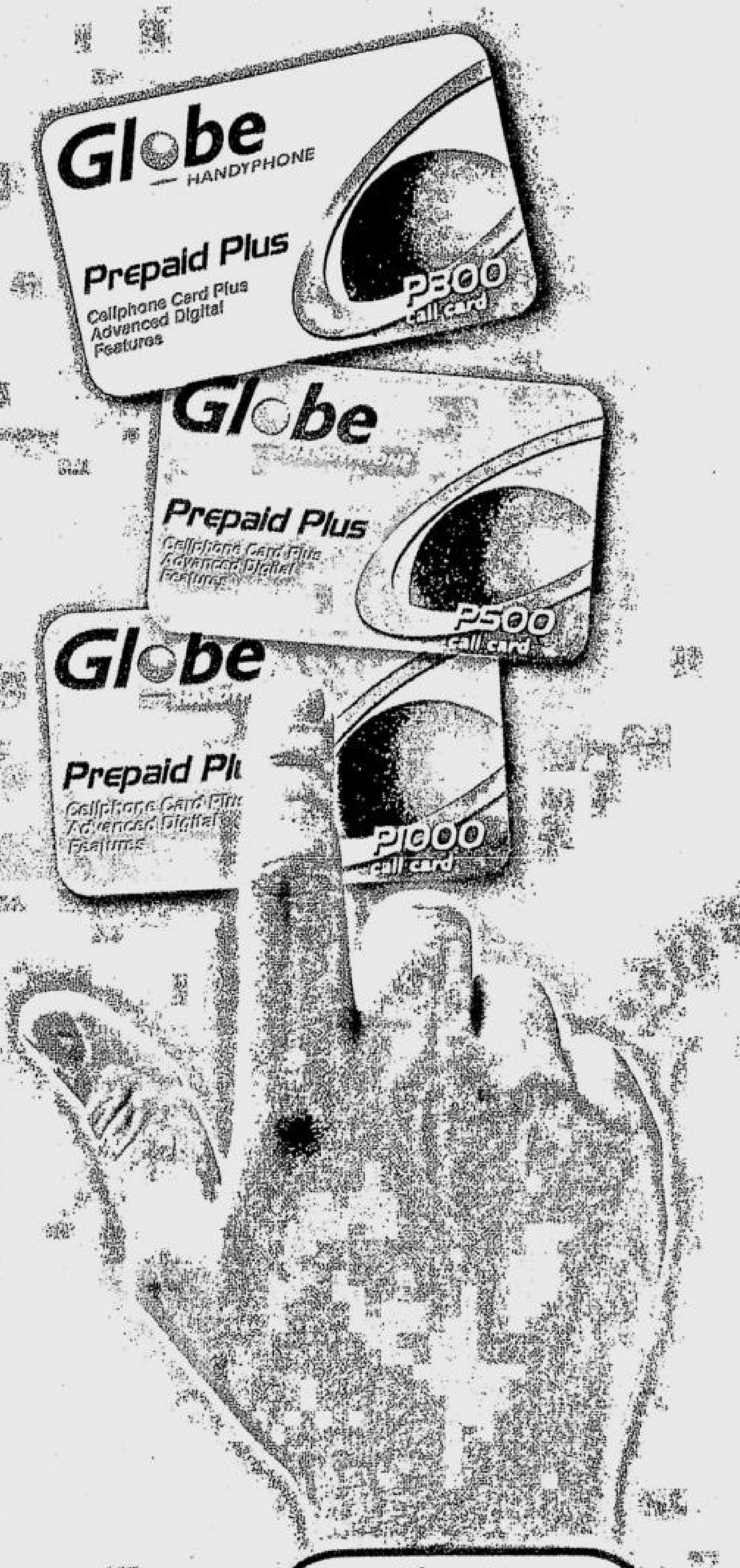
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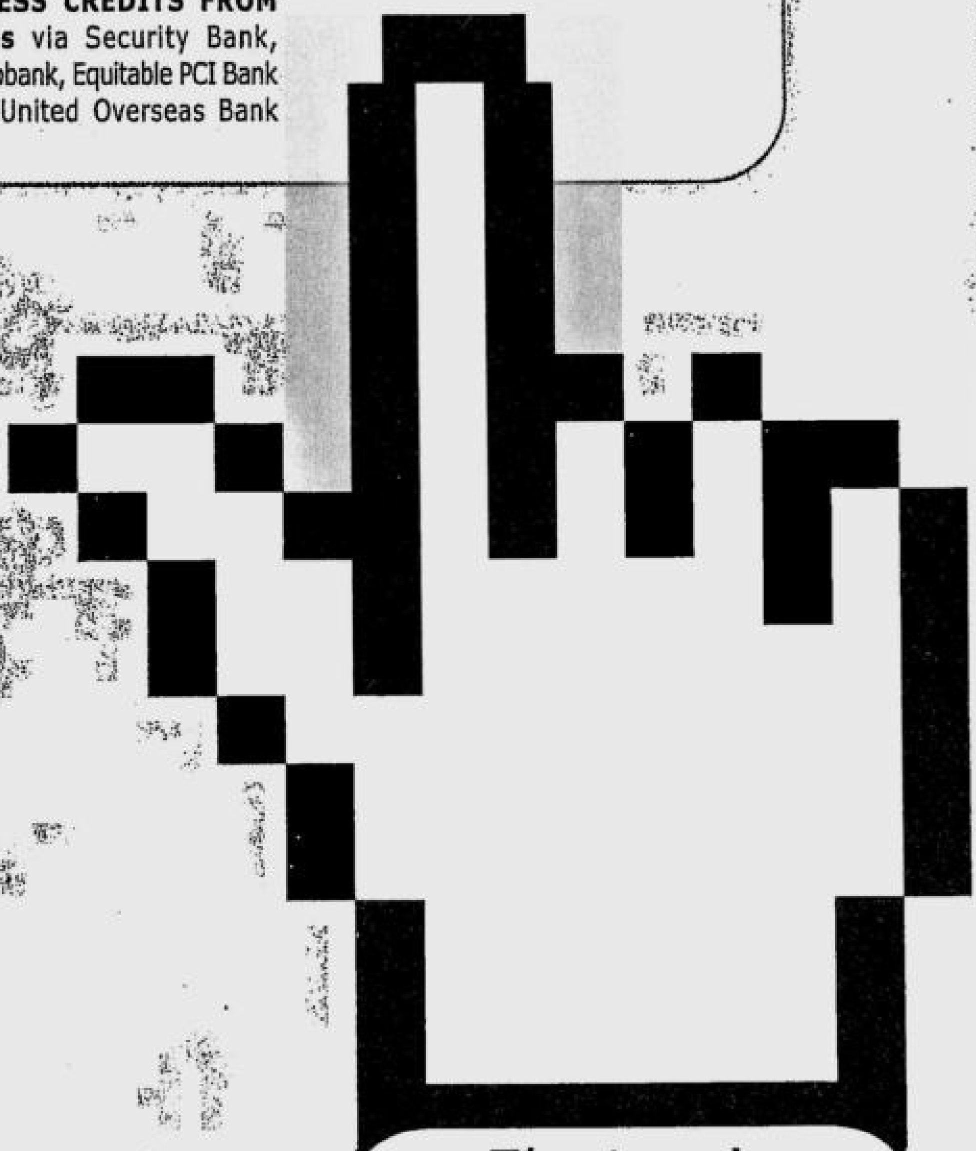

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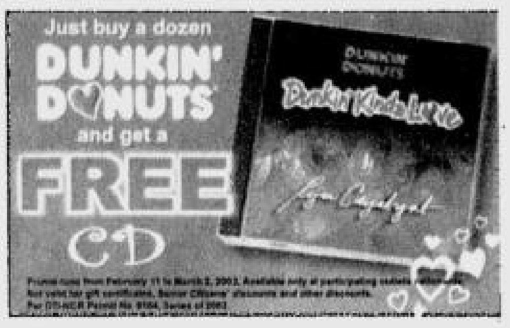
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Victorious celebration on V-letter day

MONIQUE Wilson

By Cora Llamas
Contributor

VAGINA is fast losing its reputation as a dirty word that should only be whispered in secret. In celebration, 70 Filipinas who've made their mark in theater, film, literature, journalism, media, politics, education and other fields will be saying it loudly and proudly in the world's biggest V-Day Event.

V-Day, held every year from Feb. 8 to March 8 in 270 countries, helps anti-women's violence movements while bringing to public attention the battle against abuse of women and girls (rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation and sexual slavery).

The largest by far, the Philippine edition of V-Day features 70 women leaders and a potential audience of 3,500. The second largest, New York's, will play in a 2,000-seater auditorium. V-Day founder and award- winning playwright Eve Ensler will grace the Manila show as guest of honor.

Ensler's critically acclaimed "The Vagina Monologues (TVM)" is the core of V-Day. "TVM" has empowered women to assert their sexuality through its real-life, no-holds-barred portrayal of sensitive subjects like tyrannical marriages, child abuse and rape.

But "TVM" is far from being a one-dimensional male-bashing play. Thousands of female viewers who've made the play a hit, laughing as well as weeping in recognizing their situations and those of their men, consider it an excellent—if illuminating—entertainment.

After two years touring in and out of Manila and other Asian countries, the New Voice Company's (NVC) twin productions, the original English and the Tagalog translation, have captured an ardent following. They've also caused a stir in the more conservative spots.

Religious organizations in Davao threatened (but didn't eventually) to picket the production, claiming that the play would destroy the moral fiber of society. Some colleges have closed their doors to the Tagalog version because its actresses say "*puke*" instead of "vagina."

The Singaporean government allowed performances on the condition that people with "moral authority" give endorsement letters.

The lady who gladly gave those

VICTORIOUS/ p.E3

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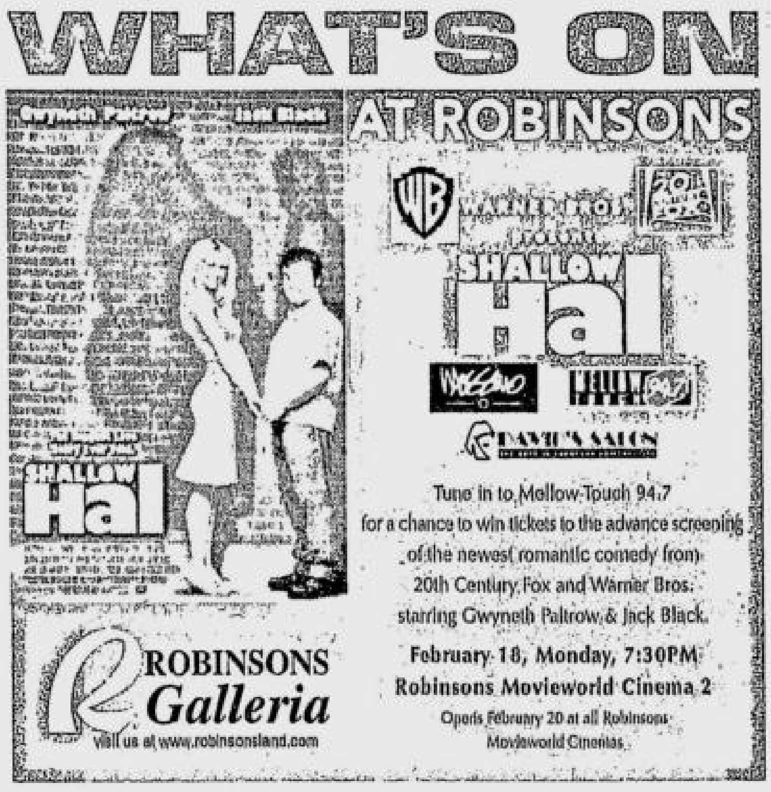
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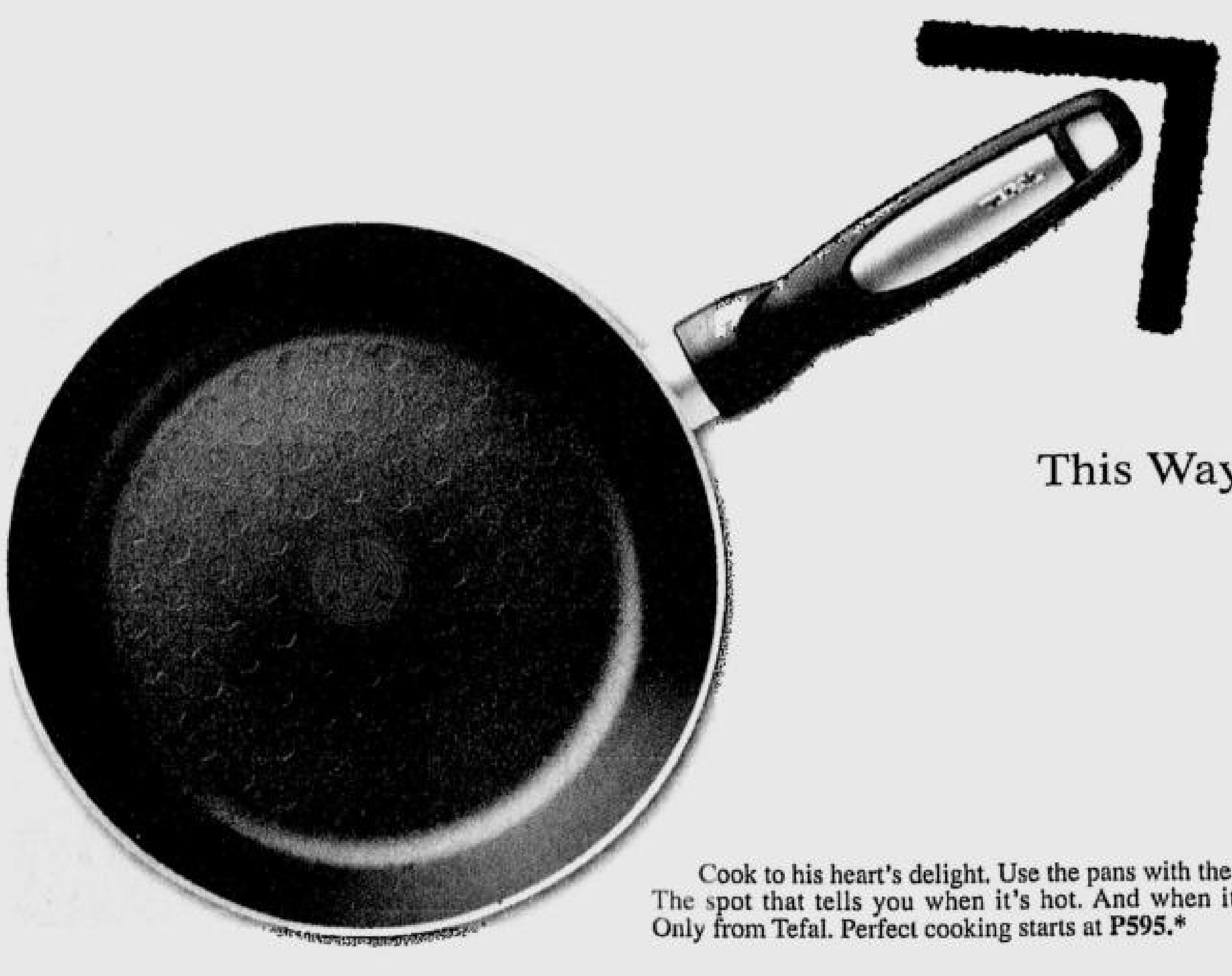
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'1899: ANG PAGPATAY KAY LUNA'

Musical whodunit drops historical bombshells

By Doreen G. Fernandez

REVIEW

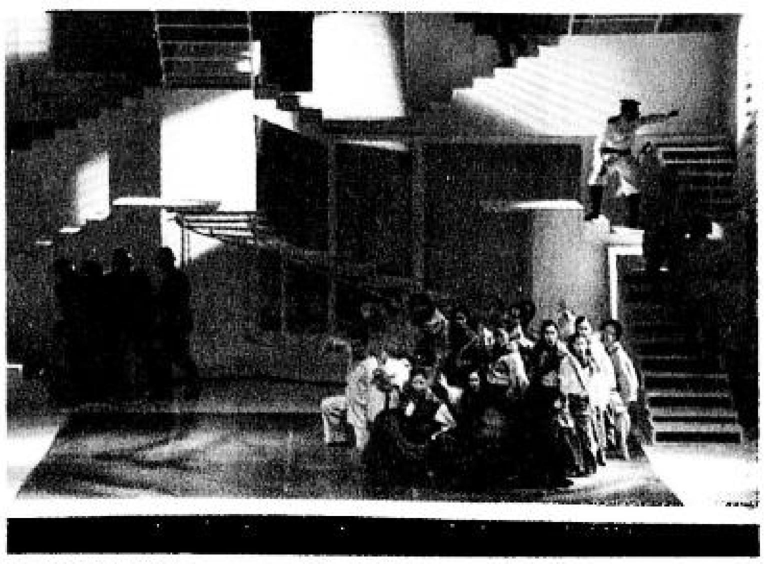
IT was the premier presentation of Paul Dumol's "1899: Ang Pagpatay kay Luna," and Nonon Padilla's announced last production for Tanghalang Pilipino as artistic director. The CCP Little Theater was packed.

The author's task was to present historical material in the form of what Padilla calls a "musical on the revolution, the second of a trilogy of plays about the birth of the Philippine nation." There have been plays about José Rizal and Juan Luna, whose lives were fraught with conflict and romance, but not about Antonio Luna, the general, "the organizer of the Philippine Army... rewarded with the vengeful knives, bolos and bullets of the soldiers and politicians he wanted to discipline, and unite in the struggle for independence."

Legwork

Paul Dumol went at it as a historian would, gathering from accounts, letters, diaries, telegrams, testimony the facts of the case. Then as a playwright (already honed in plays like "Cabesang Tales," "Felipe de las Casas," "Francisco Malago," "Ilustrado"), he wrote the libretto for Luna, incorporating not only what is generally and popularly known, but a few bombshells, probably disturbing to many, discovered in his research.

FELIPE Buencamino (Roeder Camañag), Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo (Miguel Vera), Ina ni Aguinaldo (Joy Soler de Castro) and Pedro Paterno (Ding Mercado) in a conspiracy plot against Gen. Antonio Luna (alternately played by Nonie Buencamino and Eladio Pamaran).



THE OPENING scene

The director's task was to provide the vision, to interpret the libretto on stage in terms of movement, juxtaposition, character delineation, and thus create theater. This he did with his wide vocabulary as a director, using such traditional language as the singing Cairo, and the red-white-blue motifs used in the "seditious" plays of the first decade; alongside current dramaturgy Western and Asian.

He was aided in this visualization by Agnes Locsin's apt and imaginative choreography, Salvador Bernal's brilliant single, multilevel set that transformed into a hundred variations by use, positioning and angling, and by the lighting of Naomi Matsumoto. Then, of course, there was the music of Jesse Lucas, which was memorable and serviceable whether as documentary or as lyric.

And the actors, among them: Nonie Buencamino acting and singing with power; Joy Soler de Cameo projecting dark thoughts whether still or in motion; Ding Mercado using a commanding singing voice to portray a generally unsympathetic character; Miguel Vera, strong and steady as Aguinaldo, buffeted by feelings and advice.

True

The result: A true evening of theater, an occasion, a landmark. One sits mesmerized, absorbing history through visual images and music. What could have been a talky play about a devoted but ill-tempered general, doing his best against the pressure of politicians and fellow military, has been delivered as absorbing drama.

"The theme of the musical," writes Nonon in his Director's Notes, "is best summed up in brotherhood as the true foundation of nationhood."

He and Paul looked calmly at the revelations about the Del Pilar brothers and about the mother of General Aguinaldo. Asked if it was all true, Paul said, "I will translate the sources and publish them as my notes in the program."

This prompts Nonon to ask: "We certainly have heroes—but not in the leadership!... *Hanggang ngayon naman, 'di ba?*"

Yes, we have heroes in brotherhood, but during the revolution they were "the unknowns, the minions, the assistants, the anonymous followers who bravely embraced the idea of freedom and independence—and died for such ideas quietly and in anonymity."

To enable young and old Filipinos to learn more about Philippine history through drama and entertainment; to make them think about being Filipino; to have them ready to offer blood, lives and thought (*dugo, laman, isip*, in Dumol's lyrics), is the aim of TP historical plays, and especially of this newest one, "Ang Pagpatay kay Luna," which makes these points while providing theatrical delight. Watch it.

The play runs at the CCP Little Theater (Bulwagang Aurelio Tolentino) on Feb. 22, 8 p.m., and Feb. 23 and 24, 2:30 p.m. Call telefax 832-3661/1125 local 1620, (0917) 812-4519 or the CCP Box Office 832-1125

F. Sionil Jose's classic novel 'Tree' now a play

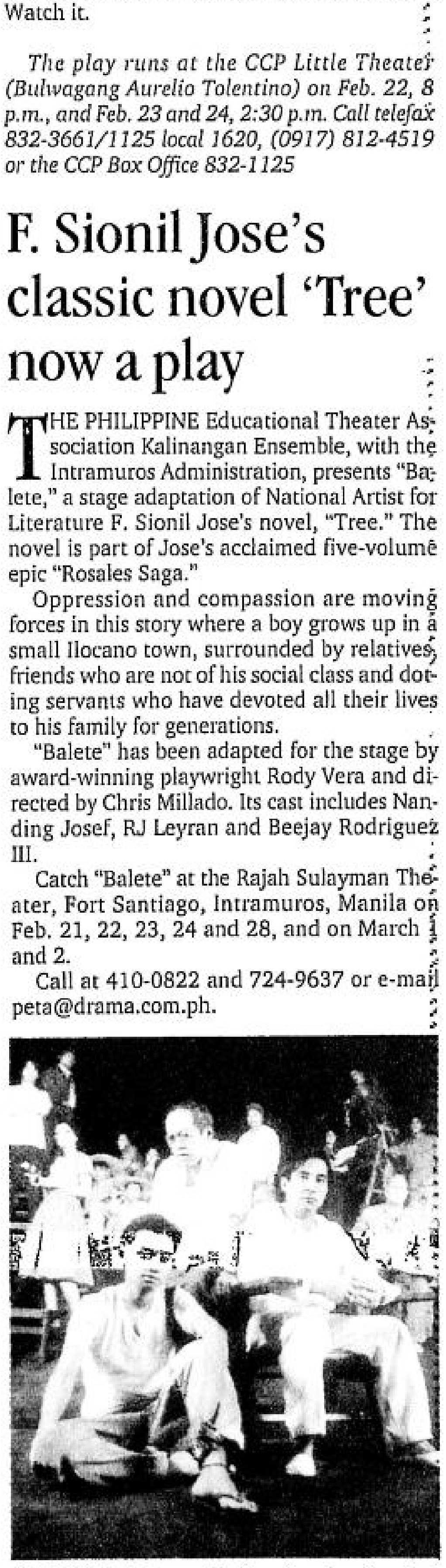
THE PHILIPPINE Educational Theater Association Kalinangan Ensemble, with the Intramuros Administration, presents "Balete," a stage adaptation of National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose's novel, "Tree." The novel is part of Jose's acclaimed five-volume epic "Rosales Saga."

Oppression and compassion are moving forces in this story where a boy grows up in a small Ilocano town, surrounded by relatives, friends who are not of his social class and doting servants who have devoted all their lives to his family for generations.

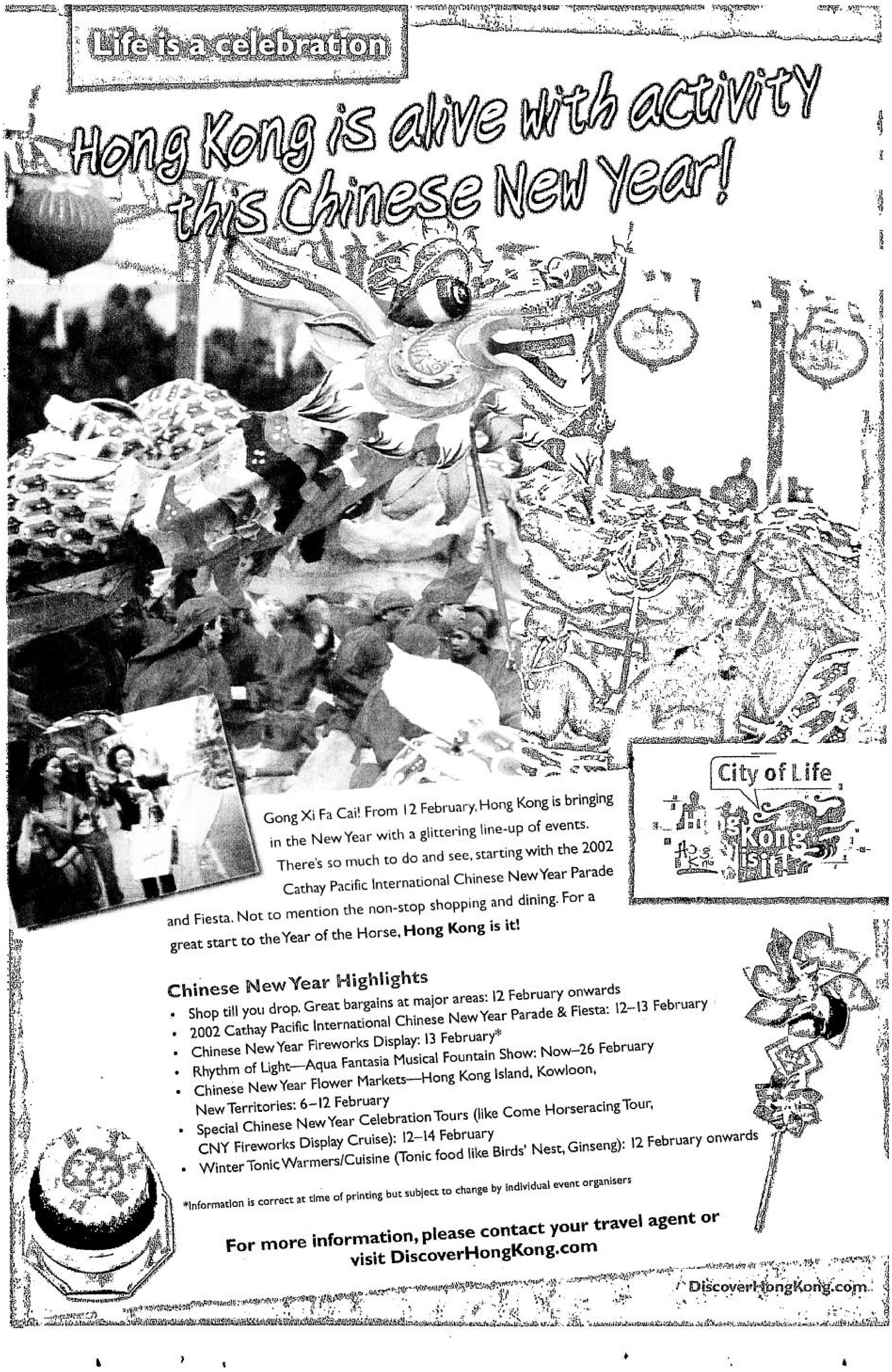
"Balete" has been adapted for the stage by award-winning playwright Rody Vera and directed by Chris Millado. Its cast includes Nanding Josef, RJ Leyran and Beejay Rodriguez III.

Catch "Balete" at the Rajah Sulayman Theater, Fort Santiago, Intramuros, Manila on Feb. 21, 22, 23, 24 and 28, and on March 1 and 2.

Call at 410-0822 and 724-9637 or e-mail peta@drama.com.ph.



BEEJAY Rodriguez III, Nanding Josef and RJ Leyran lead the cast.



Gong Xi Fa Cai! From 12 February, Hong Kong is bringing in the New Year with a glittering line-up of events. There's so much to do and see, starting with the 2002 Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Parade and Fiesta. Not to mention the non-stop shopping and dining. For a great start to the Year of the Horse, **Hong Kong is it!**

Chinese New Year Highlights

- Shop till you drop. Great bargains at major areas: 12 February onwards
- 2002 Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Parade & Fiesta: 12–13 February
- Chinese New Year Fireworks Display: 13 February*
- Rhythm of Light—Aqua Fantasia Musical Fountain Show: Now–26 February
- Chinese New Year Flower Markets—Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories: 6–12 February
- Special Chinese New Year Celebration Tours (like Come Horseracing Tour, CNY Fireworks Display Cruise): 12–14 February
- Winter Tonic Warmers/Cuisine (Tonic food like Birds' Nest, Ginseng): 12 February onwards

*Information is correct at time of printing but subject to change by individual event organisers

For more information, please contact your travel agent or visit DiscoverHongKong.com

VDAY
PHILIPPINES

THE START 'em young teenage members of the New Voice Company render a song.

KABABAIHAN
KABABAIHAN
KABABAIHAN

CHE-CHE Lazaro, Zeneida Amador and Rosanne Abueva

Victorious celebration on V-letter day

From page E1

letters, Sr. Mary John Mananzan of Gabriela, is now appearing onstage in the V-Day event. And if her vagina could talk, it would exclaim in exasperation, "Why can't you believe that God created me, too?"

Hear them

Listen to what the other "vaginas" are saying:

Arlene Borja, "TVM" cast member: "*Lab ko ang mga puki. Lab ko ang mga babae. Hindi ko sila tinuturing na mga hiwalay.*"

Maita Beltran, visual artist: "Thank you for hearing my voice. Lesbians have vaginas, too."

Jasmine Zueger, the youngest participant: "I'm only 13."

Rep. Liza Maza: "I'm no Abu Sayyaf lover, but I'm a Filipino."

Leah Navarro: "I've always been a pleasure dome. So if there's a happy penis over there... (Laughter) But my hands are pretty good, too."

Bibeth Orteza: "My vagina is under censorship, but honored by a faithful penis."

Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, Peta founder: "It's sacred and precious."

Christine Carlos, actress: "*Matagal ko nang na-*realize *na dapat bigyan ng kaligayahan ang aking* vagina. I know how to make myself happy without a man making me happy."

Dulce Aristorenas, "TVM" cast member: "My vagina is a sanctuary, and if I let you in, that means I love you. So make sure that you love me back in return."

VDAY
PHILIPPINES

LARA Fabregas

SR. Mary John Mananzan

That's just the tip of the iceberg. Guess who else will be mouthing the monologues on Feb. 23? Cynthia Alexander, Zeneida and Pinky Amador, Angel Aquino, Baby Barredo, Rina Jimenez-David, Gilda Fernando, Malou de Guzman, Alya Honasan, Nanette Inventor, Che-Che Lazaro, Celeste Legaspi, Sarah Meier, Tami and Winnie Monsod, Roselle Nava, Grace Nono, Mitch Valdez and more.

Along with Tami Monsod, Borja and Aristorenas, the other cast members of the English and Filipino productions will be present: NVC artistic director Monique Wilson, Harlene Bautista-Sarmenta, Missy Maramara and Lara Fabregas.

Wilson didn't have a hard time getting these women on board free of charge. Many volunteered or immediately agreed. All share a common bond. "They emulated that sense of empowerment we see on the show, says Wilson. "Their voices have already made a difference in theater, broadcast media, politics, film, TV, etc. They want to help and lend their voices."

Censorship

Underlying the humorous banter during the V-Day presscon was a very serious issue: censorship, direct or indirect, of the word *vagina* and its various versions implies closed doors and dear ears to the issues they represent.

As PDI's own lifestyle editor Chelo Banal-Formoso said in the presscon, "I don't know what the big deal is [in saying the word]. In Payatas, the women say [*puke*] without any embarrassment."

Still, the word remains a big deal in some quarters. A few years ago, a very stringent MTRCB slapped a P25,000 fine on the TV show "Probe" for airing the word *puke* in an episode on comfort women used as sex toys by World War II Japanese soldiers. In defending the piece, saying that the word was used in context, producer Che-Che Lazaro was reprimanded, "It arouses prurient interests."

And the offensive line? The strongest sound bite, voiced by a 70-year-old survivor: "*Ang sakit-sakit ng aking puke.*" Lazaro was aghast. "What was prurient about that?"

Wilson's standard answer to accusations of moral disruption could have been the perfect rebuttal: "Ignorance destroys a nation's moral fiber."

"TVM" veteran Fabregas says the play is a liberation. "Growing up, it was difficult to say the word *vagina*. As girls, we were taught to smile, be pretty and gracious. But we didn't talk about the essence of womanhood or what a woman is supposed to be. 'TVM' helped me to see through other women's experiences."

Researching about women for her movie scripts was an eye-opener for Orteza. "In talking to the marginalized sector, you cannot be left insensitive and not want to do anything, do your part and focus attention." Her dream project is a Garcia-Marquez-like magic-realist film about a woman with a closed vagina. "*Hindi siya tumutulong sa sarili niyang kababaihan.* Only when she becomes aware that the vagina is not just for sex, and helps, *doon lang nagbukas ang puke niya.*"

For Repertory Philippines founder Zeneida Amador, it's better late than never. "I've been so busy fighting my own battles, a woman instilling discipline in grown men. Years went on before people realized that I mean business. Now, it's time to help the women in other fields. *Akala ko hindi inaapi ang babae rito*, until I started reading the papers and listening to the NGOs."

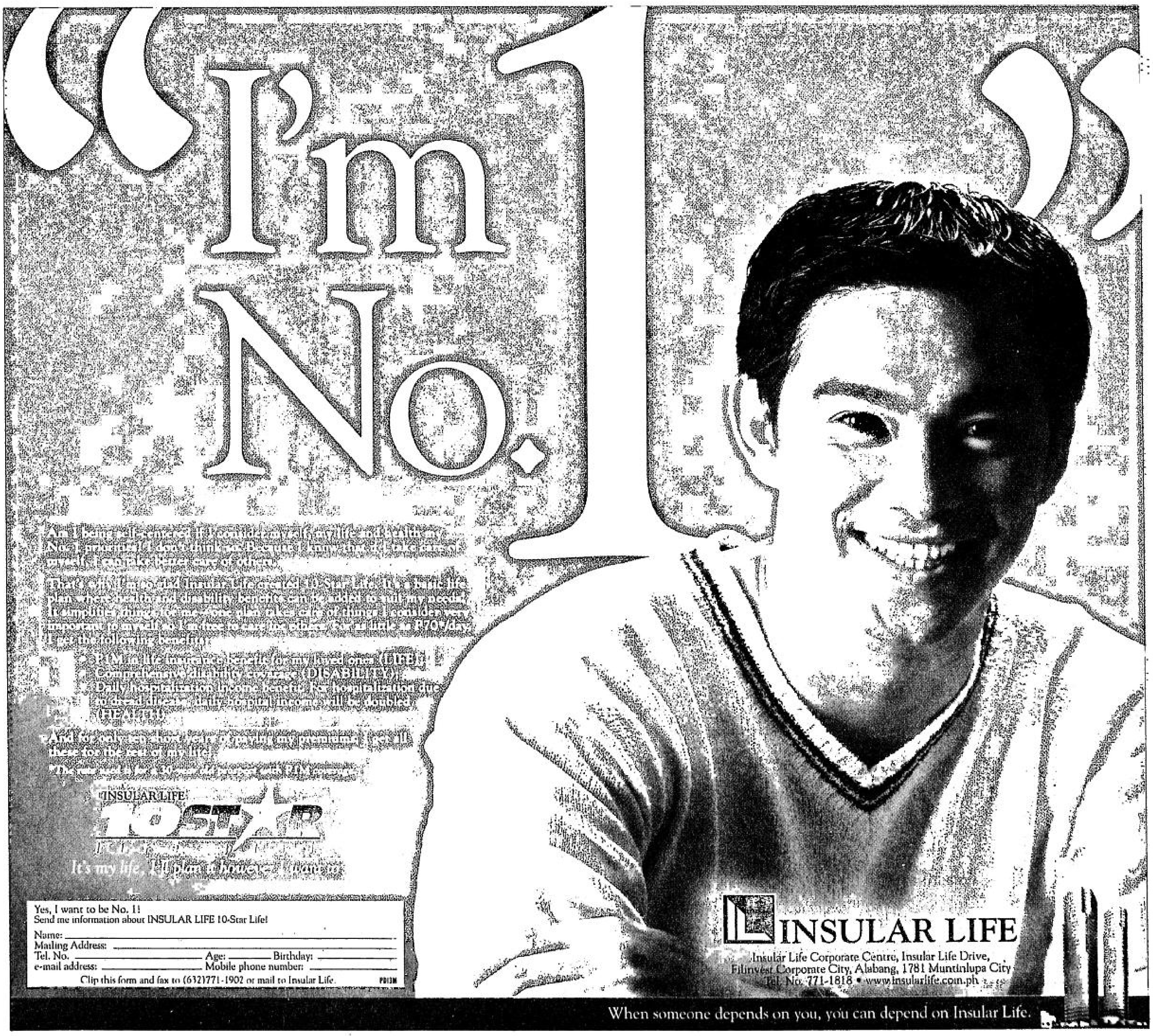
The theater pioneer who has directed more than 100 productions says the material "is ennobling for women and gives them respect. It should not be called pornographic or vulgar." The urgency of its message should also awaken other women and spur them to get involved.

"*Kung hindi kaming mga puki ngayon, sino pa? Kung hindi ngayon, kailan pa?*"

"Kababaihan... A Benefit Performance of 'The Vagina Monologues'" goes on stage on Feb. 23 at 8 p.m. at the Folk Arts Theater. Beneficiaries include the Purple Rose Campaign, Women's Crisis Center, Kalakasan and WomenLEAD. Call 896-5497 or 896-6695.

'ALIKABOK' GOES ON STAGE

Musical Theater Philippines will stage "Alikabok," a musical inspired by Juan Luna's painting "La Bulakeña." It is the story of Bising, a strong-headed woman who joins the Philippine revolution against Spain. With libretto by Nolie Balmaceda and music by Ryan Cayabyab, the musical stars Cris Villonco, Diane de la Fuente, Jeffrey Hildago and China Cojuangco. Call 721-7229, 723-1765/1845.



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Shaping Up & Staying Sexy the Marie-France Way

Slimming down isn't simply a matter of losing weight. Beyond the pounds and the inches lost, it's also about adopting a healthier lifestyle and regaining the confidence of having a slimmer figure. More than anything, these are the two major influences for most women who want to achieve weight loss. **Marie-France Bodyline International** understands what women want when it comes to having a healthier, shapelier body. And what better way to help reach their goal than through **Marie-France's Shape Up Philippines.**

Marie-France's Shape Up Philippines gives you generous discounts, free treatments, and expert advice on weight management from the centre's consultants and physicians.

Marie-France began Shape Up Philippines in 1994 to promote the importance of healthy weight and shape management among women. Now on its 8th year, this annual week-long event aims to encourage women to attain and maintain a slimmer, healthier figure at Marie-France through its highly effective slimming programme without the pain and strain that other weight-loss methods may bring.

What makes Shape Up Philippines a highly anticipated affair is that Marie-France makes it much easier for more women to slim down with generous offers such as discounts and free treatments exclusively for clients and enrollees. Aside from these, you can also get a free Body Fat Analysis and free consultations with the center's physicians and expert consultants with regard to your weight and figure problems.

Among the non-invasive and highly effective slimming treatments that Marie-France has to offer is the revolutionary **Endermologie, the FDA-approved treatment for cellulite reduction.** Cellulite can happen to anyone, regardless of weight, age, or shape. Even if you're slim, you can still have it. Cellulite appears as dimpled, ripples of fat on the hips, abdomen, thighs, and buttocks. It is also described as "cottage cheese" or "orange peel" because of its lumpy look and bumpy feel. It is caused by a vicious cycle that involves two opposing forces: as the vertical connective tissue pulls down the skin, fluid retention and enlarged fat cells push it up. Cellulite is not to be confused with stretchmarks which occur due to the stretching of the skin and appear as thick red lines that become thin and whitish after pregnancy. Diet and exercise cannot get rid of cellulite because they fail to act on its underlying cause in the superficial tissue of your skin. This is where Endermologie comes in. Unlike so-called cellulite-eliminating creams and lotions, this non-invasive treatment is proven effective in improving the skin's condition. It targets cellulite by restructuring the connective tissues, reduces water retention by stimulating blood and lymph circulation, and enhances fat-breakdown at various fatty tissue levels. The result: a smoother, slimmer appearance with actual inch-loss in areas where cellulite used to be..

Marie-France clients Connie Velarde and Anna Marie Golez were among those who have had first-hand experience on the incredible benefits of Endermologie. Connie took up aerobics and used exercise machines to get rid of cellulite but to no avail. She was about to give up altogether when she heard about Endermologie. After losing a total of 26 extra inches of fat and cellulite from all over her body, she claims that Endermologie is "the best method for me in reducing cellulite." She is now proud of her "slimmer, more streamlined shape with hardly any trace of cellulite anywhere!" Anna's cellulite problem gave her a flabby tummy with thighs that had the classic lumpy look of cellulite. After trying Endermologie, Anna noticed that "my tummy became flatter and my thighs no longer had dimpled ripples of fat that were so obvious back then." Aside from getting rid of cellulite, she was also able to regain her slim figure.

With its additional newly opened branches, Marie-France's slimming services are now more accessible to women who want to become slimmer and healthier. For more details on Shape Up Philippines and how you can benefit from this week-long weight-loss event, please check Marie-France print ads for contact numbers or feel free to visit the branch nearest you.

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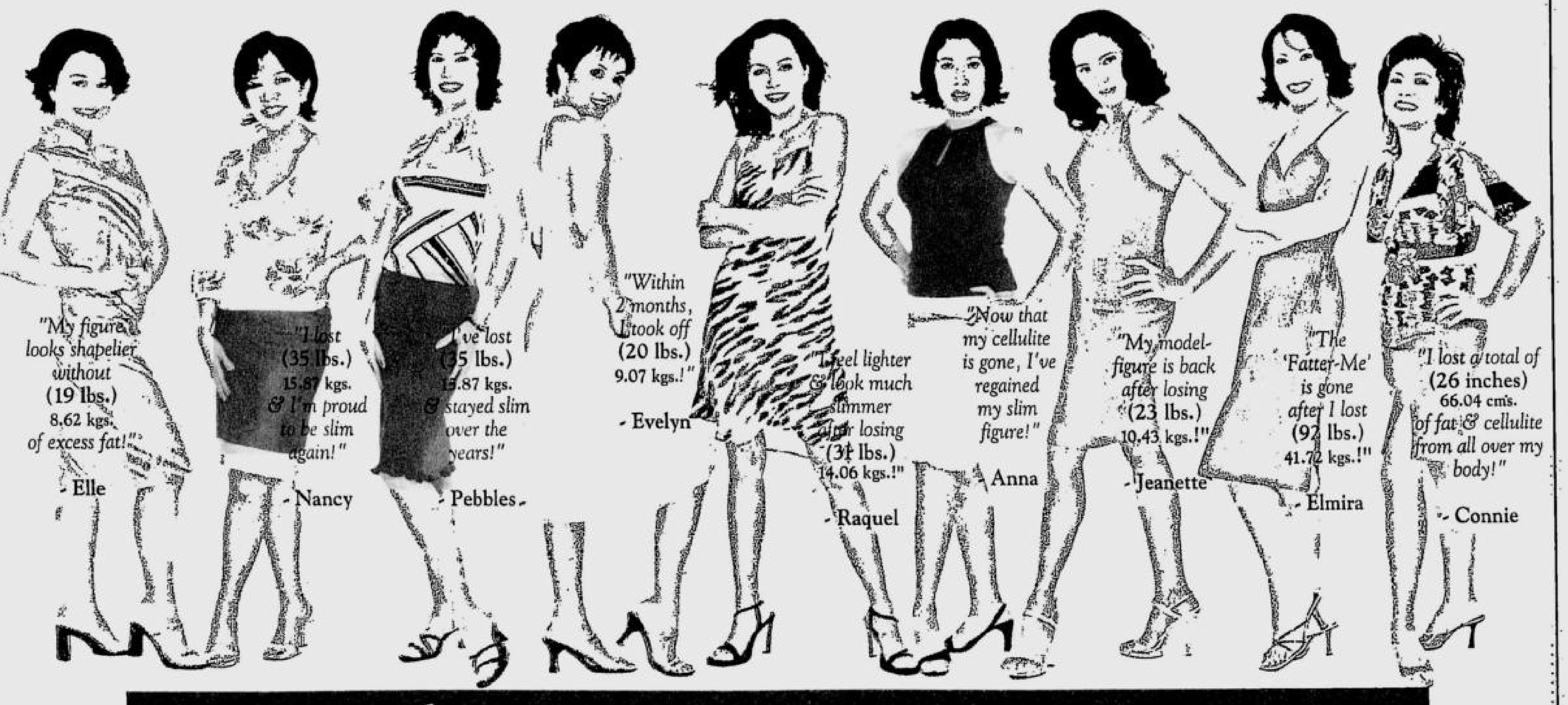

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"Now that my cellulite is gone, I've regained my slim figure!" - Anna

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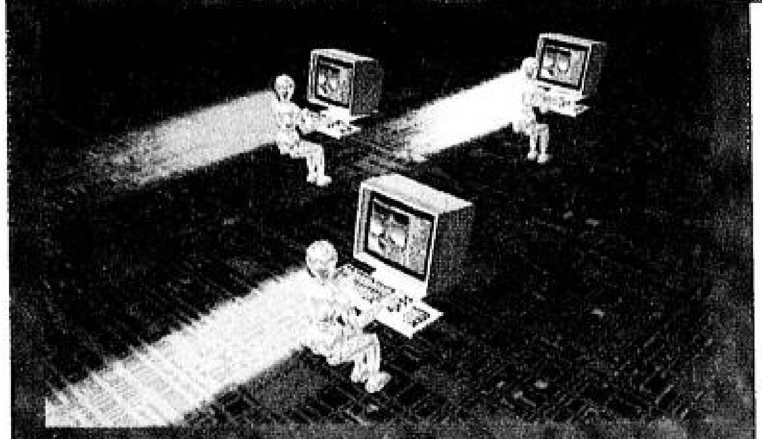
Microsoft disputes study saying IBM-Lotus messaging software is more cost-effective



By Erwin G. Oliva
INQ7.net

SOFTWARE giant Microsoft Corp. recently disputed a study showing that the cost of running its messaging and collaborative software was higher than competing software sold by IBM/Lotus.

The Radicati Group study, which was reportedly commissioned by both IBM and Microsoft, reported that customers of IBM's Lotus Notes "realized" bigger cost savings than users of Microsoft Exchange Server.

The study, which involved 1,000 companies and organizations, was conducted by the analyst firm late in 2001. Its objective was meant to analyze and compare the "total cost of ownership" of messaging software among Global 1000 enterprises. They were asked about the amount of money, time and resources they spent to deploy messaging systems from IBM (Lotus Notes 5.05) and Microsoft (Exchange 2000).

The study was reportedly sponsored in "equal amounts" by IBM and Microsoft.

Among the parameters used to measure the total cost of ownership was the impact of downtimes (scheduled and unscheduled), or the period when the system conks out.

According to the report, the cost related to downtimes for Microsoft Exchange was 200 percent higher than Lotus Notes. It was noted that the "fairly high amount of downtime for Microsoft Exchange was due largely to unscheduled downtime, while Lotus' downtime was largely due to scheduled maintenance."

"What the study shows is that we're cheaper to run than Microsoft," Max Mclaren, regional general manager of Asean/Asia South Lotus Software of the IBM Software Group, told INQ7.net. "Our messaging software has a lot of technical solutions, which Microsoft is poor at," the 10-year Lotus executive added.

In a white paper, Microsoft, however, argued that the "number of assertions and assumptions made in the Radicati 2001 report make the results difficult to interpret." The software firm even insisted that the study does not provide an "accurate" model of messaging cost of ownership, and "may even be misleading."

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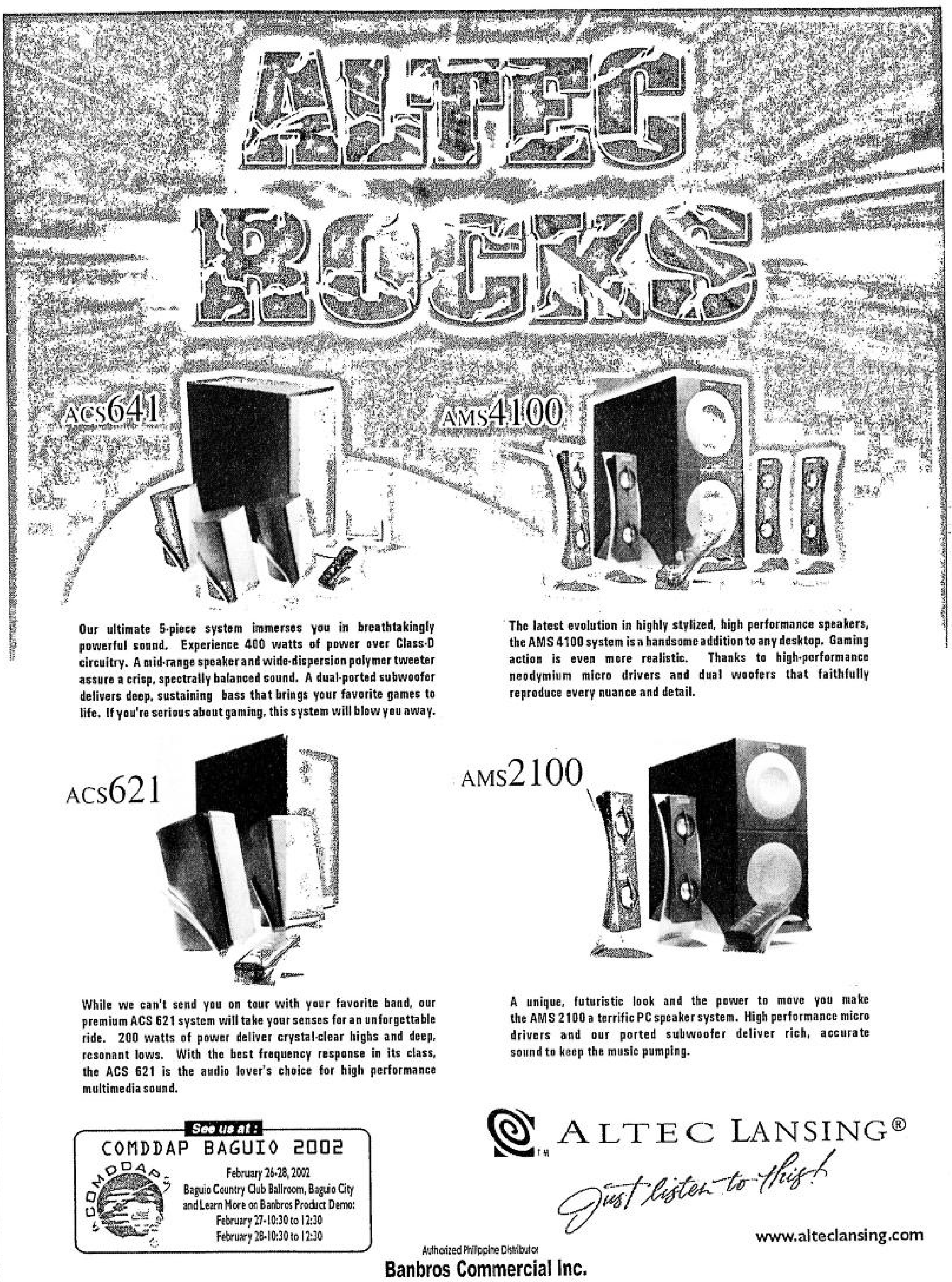
THE BEEF

- The Radicati Group was reportedly commissioned by both IBM and Microsoft to conduct a study on the total cost of ownership (TCO) of MS Exchange compared with IBM's Lotus Notes.
- The study concluded that Lotus Notes customers realized bigger cost savings than users of MS Exchange Server.

THE BONE

- Microsoft argued in a white paper that the study does not provide an "accurate" model of messaging cost of ownership, and "may even be misleading."
- Microsoft argued that the TCO of Exchange 2000 Server was "lower over a three-year period than IBM/Lotus' Notes R5."



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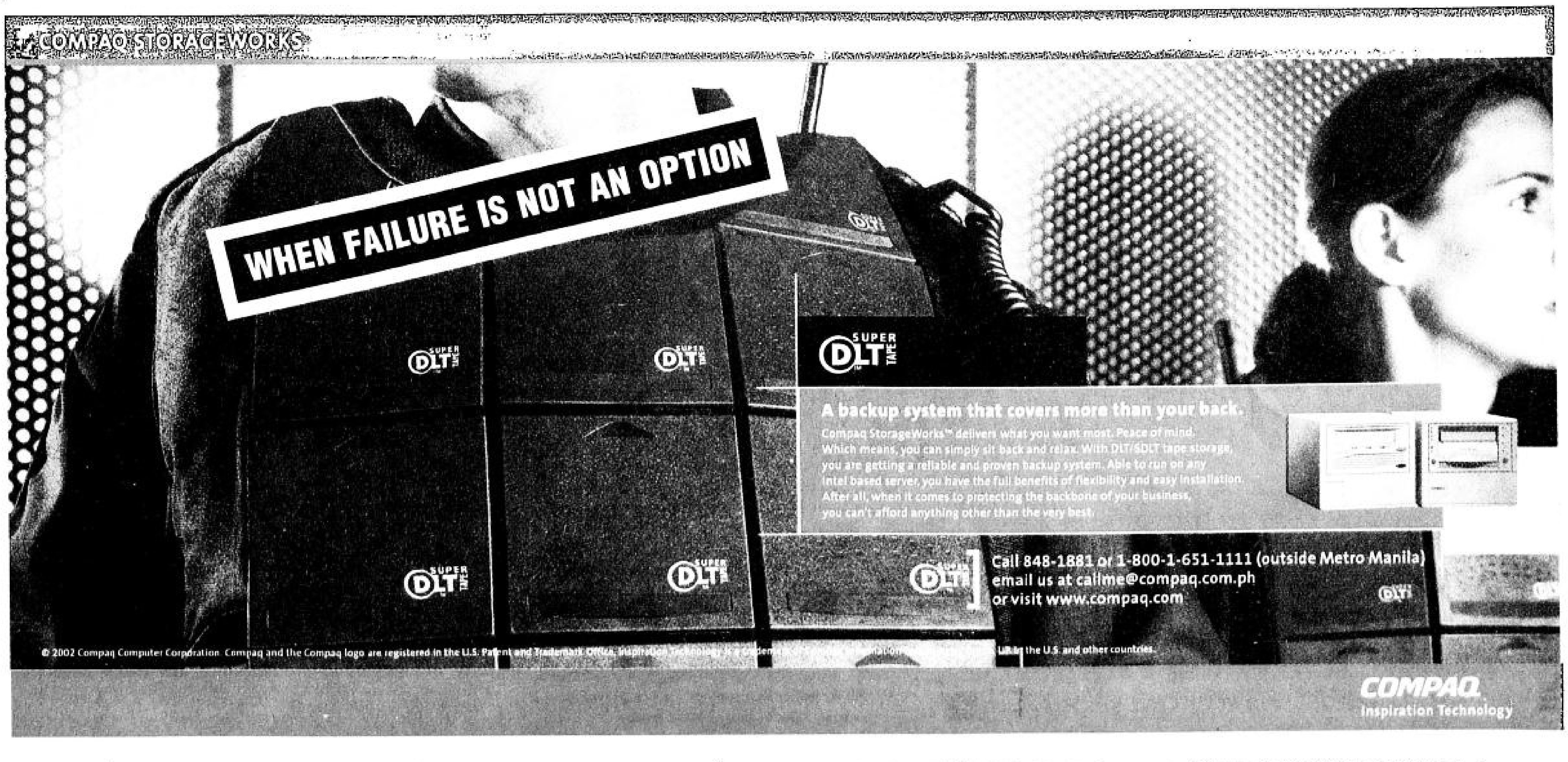

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RP bank to spend P50M in online banking project

By Joel D. Pinaroc

CHINA Banking Corp. will soon join the local online banking fray with an Internet banking project worth $500,000 (about P25 million) which the bank is set to sign. This is on top of the P25 million to P30 million invested by Chinabank in another networking project which the company has started rolling out early this year.

Although Chinabank's US partner for the online banking project was not named, the agreement will be signed by both sides within the first quarter of this year, according to Phillip Tan, Chinabank vice president for information technology.

Expected to be fully operational before the end of 2002, Chinabank's online banking project will initially service customers but will eventually allow business-to-business transactions between the bank and its corporate clients.

"We will be able to provide B2C (business-to-consumer) transactions first, but we will eventually provide B2B (business-to-business) capabilities to our partners and corporate clients," Tan said.

Tan noted that once in place, the Internet banking project will allow consumers to access information via mobile phones, as the system will have provisions for short messaging service (SMS) and wireless applications protocol (WAP) using the general packet radio service (GPRS).

Tan added that Chinabank is currently laying the groundwork for its Internet banking initiative with a separate, security-focused networking project the bank is currently undertaking. This security-focused networking project is expected to "complement" Chinabank's Internet banking initiative. He said Chinabank has put in place a new system to improve its network as well as provide added network security for the bank's 138 branches nationwide.

The project, primarily consisting of a security and a remote access module from software company Novell, was started last year and has an estimated cost of P25 million to P30 million. The new system is expected to be fully operational within the year.

"Our main consideration for improving our existing network is to improve network security and provide remote banking convenience to our customers," Tan said. "This is also an important part of our preparations as we will eventually implement Internet banking this year."

The bulk of the network project consists of hardware and software licenses. The company has acquired high-end Pentium III Compaq servers and new firewall solutions to upgrade its existing network. It has also acquired a new front-end solution, a Lotus application, to eventually replace the Microsoft Exchange application the bank is currently using.

Study says not all hackers are real computer wizards

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PORTELLI

SINGAPORE—Watch enough movies involving cybercrime and you would get the impression that crackers (often referred to as computer hackers) have high IQs who just decided to use their intelligence for evil.

The disturbing truth, however, is that most crackers or hackers are just bored, antisocial kids who have little knowledge about the Internet but have a lot of time on their hands.

These individuals' idea of fun is to penetrate the websites of even the biggest corporations and leave behind as much damage as they could. The bigger the company, the greater the challenge.

Jeff Portelli, senior vice president of MasterCard International, said in a conference here on MasterCard's e-business tools, that studies revealed that less than 10 percent of crackers are competent programmers. The rest are ordinary individuals with just the most basic knowledge of how to work the computer.

Portelli explained that it was quite easy for people with the time and intent to break through a website as the Internet was filled with websites where the potential hackers could get step-by-step instructions.

There are over 30 hacker publications in the market, 440 hacker bulletin boards and 400,000 websites dedicated to "hacking tips."

These include hackers.com, securityfocus.com, www-berlin.ccc.de, rootshell.com, 2600.com, insecure.org and piracy.com.

Mark Patrick, MasterCard vice president for interactive services, said hacking has become so prevalent that at least one cybercrime is committed every 20 seconds. The US government alone said that it would likely experience over 300,000 Internet attacks this year.

Patrick said hackers spend the time and effort to penetrate websites because of the intellectual challenge, gang mentality, recognition, theft of information, vandalism, blackmail, sabotage — and for the most extreme cases—terrorism.

There are seven phases, he said, to a successful hacker attack.

First step is the reconnaissance, where the hacker gathers information about the target network, followed by the probe and attack of the website where the hacker finds weaknesses in the website and deploys the required tools.

The third step is establishing a toehold where the hacker exploits weaknesses and enters the website, followed by advancement or gaining privileged access and the stealth.

Once their tracks are covered, the hacker then steals information, the most popular of which are lists of credit card numbers. Finally, the hacker takes over the website.

Even the biggest websites have not been spared. These include amazon.com, Microsoft, Yahoo and e-Bay. CDNow, one of the largest online retail websites, was even forced to close down its operations following a particularly brutal hacker attack.

It is hard to quantify the losses incurred due to hacking but a report in 2000 estimated that losses due to hacking of websites could reach as high as $1.6 trillion.

Global e-commerce spending to pass $1 trillion

SINGAPORE—Global electronic commerce spending is forecast to top a trillion dollars this year, up from $600 billion in 2001, an industry monitor said Friday.

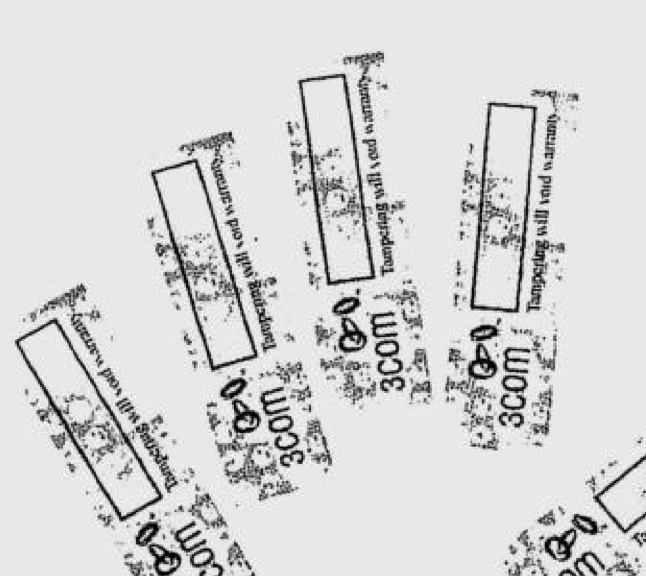
International Data Corp. (IDC) said in a statement that by end-2002, more than 600 million people—roughly 10 percent of the world's population—would have accessed the Internet. It said that "worldwide e-commerce spending grew 68 percent between 2000 and 2001 despite all the economic woes and political unrest, reaching more than $600 billion in 2001."

"IDC forecasts that e-commerce spending will pass the $1 trillion mark in 2002. Growth in all regions will be strong, but the factors behind that growth and the drivers of continued growth vary by region, by country," it added.

Unlike before when Internet users had a similar profile, users now cut across ages, educational levels and occupations from all countries, according to an IDC study.

Among the key findings of the study is that by 2006, the percentage of people accessing the Internet will grow by 80 percent, and more than half of them will be buyers. For Asia, mobile phone usage will remain high, but mobile commerce will take time to achieve its potential, IDC said.

AFP



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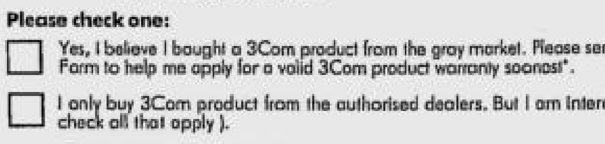
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IBM helps kids better learn Science, Math, English

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva
INQ7.net

ONE Saturday afternoon, computer company IBM gave Filipino kids ages 5 and up a chance to play around with the computer. Asked to create a Valentine card using customized computer software, the kids worked on the task with much delight. In a few minutes, they produced colorful cards with messages of love to their family.

"I would like to think that teaching art to children helps make this a more peaceful world," said Jack Hamill, president and chief executive officer of IBM Philippines, following a turnover of P800,000 worth of educational computer software and hardware to the new Ayala Museum in Glorietta 3, Makati City, last week.

The recent donation is part of IBM's global community and educational initiatives, which it has been doing for the past decade, Hamill said.

In the Philippines, IBM has been promoting computer-aided instruction at the pre-school and elementary levels through an initiative called KidSmart Early Learning program. This program has benefited 35 elementary schools, day care centers and museums in the country, apart from training at least 200 teachers on using computers in instruction, according to the executive.

The opening of the Young Explorer Fun and Learning Computer Center at the Ayala Museum is IBM's latest educational initiative, Hamill said. The center serves as a place where parents can bring their kids to learn Science, Math and English using educational software and multimedia computers.

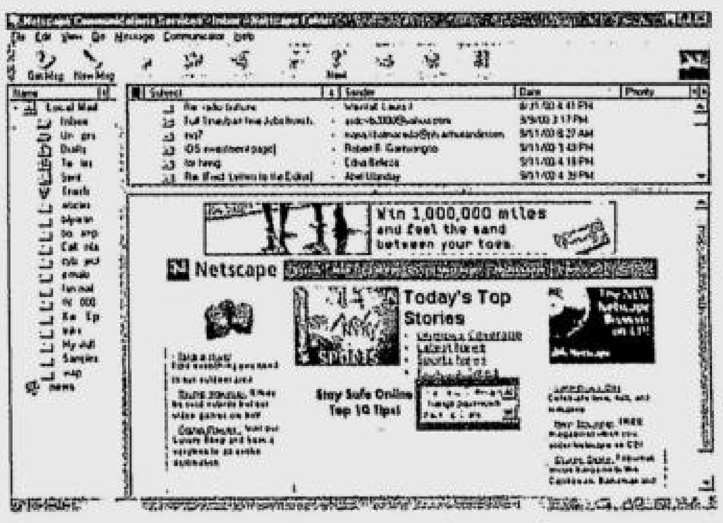
Last year, IBM also put up a similar facility at the Science Works in Marikina City.

IBM is one of the largest corporate contributors of cash, equipment and even "people" to non-profit organizations and educational institutions, including museums, Hamill said.

The executive claimed that IBM has been in 153 countries, helping people use information technology to improve their quality of life.

"IBM has always felt the deep sense of responsibility to enhance, in some small and some not so small ways, the welfare of the communities in which we do business and in which our employees and customers live," he added.

The Ayala Museum, for its part, is helping IBM spark interest in digital art by conducting workshops for kids, Hamill said.


Netscape
Win 1,000,000 miles and feel the sand between your toes.
Today's Top Stories
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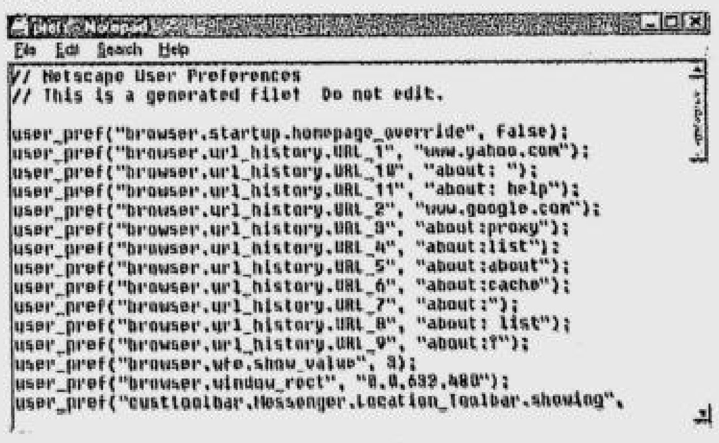
IF you don't want to see Netcenter when starting up your Netscape e-mail client (above), add a few lines to your preference file (below).



```
// Netscape User Preferences
// This is a generated file!  Do not edit.

user_pref("browser.startup.homepage_override", false);
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_1", "www.yahoo.com");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_10", "about: ");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_11", "about: help");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_2", "www.google.com");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_3", "about:proxy");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_4", "about:list");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_5", "about:about");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_6", "about:cache");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_7", "about:");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_8", "about: list");
user_pref("browser.url_history.URL_9", "about:f");
user_pref("browser.wfe.show_value", 3);
user_pref("browser.window_rect", "0,0,632,480");
user_pref("custtoolbar.Messenger.Location_Toolbar.showing",
```

How to disable or modify Messenger's Netcenter

By Jerry Liao

POWERTIPS

EVERYTIME you start Netscape Messenger, a page will be loaded under your message pane. This is called the Netscape Netcenter page. You can either disable this feature entirely, or have it load a different webpage. Here's how to disable it:

(1) Exit Communicator and Messenger.
(2) Open Windows Explorer.
(3) Go to "Program Files, then "Netscape" then "Users."
(4) Select the Profile that you want to change.
(5) Open your preferences file (prefs.js) using your favorite text editor.
(6) Add the following line to the bottom of your preferences file:

user_pref("mailnews.start_page.enabled", false);

(7) Save and close the file. Start Messenger.
(8) Messenger will now start up with an empty message pane.

How to load another page:

(1) Follow steps 1 to 5 as described above.
(2) Add the following two lines to the bottom of your preferences file:

user_pref("mailnews.start_page.enabled", true);

user_pref("mailnews.start_page.url", "http://www.brainshare.com.ph");

(3) Save and close the file. Start Messenger.
(4) This will cause Messenger to start up with your specified home page rather than the default start page.

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. We also invite our readers to join The Powertips Group. Register online at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and receive free tips via e-mail.

Demand for Pinoy IT consultants continues to soar in Asia-Pacific

By Joel D. Pinaroc

THE DEMAND for Filipino information technology (IT) consultants in the field of enterprise resource planning (ERP) continues to grow in the Asia-Pacific region despite the expected slowdown in spending in the IT industry as an aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. This is according to enterprise software solutions provider SAP, following a revenue report made recently by its Philippine office.

According to SAP officials, Filipino talents continue to play a significant part in the rollout of SAP applications throughout the region, foremost of which is the Asia-wide implementation of an ERP solution of softdrink behemoth Coca-Cola. They say Asian firms have been requesting the services of Filipino consultants in multimillion-dollar ERP projects.

According to SAP Philippines managing director Ian Black: "Filipino consultants were integral to the successful, region-wide implementation of SAP by Coca-Cola," and that "Coke executives consistently requested that our Filipino consultants work with them throughout Asia, not just the Philippines."

Black further said that Filipinos are also in-demand in the local front, handling and managing multimillion-peso projects for local conglomerates such as San Miguel Corp., Ayala Land and Unilever. Other local companies which have successfully implemented their ERP-based solutions are Ayala Corp., utilities firm Manila Water, Quantum Foods and retail giant Supervalue of the SM Group of Companies.

On the government side, SAP reported that the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Government Service Insurance System have also successfully implemented their SAP solutions.

On its revenue report, Black said 2001 "was a good year" for SAP, with the subsidiary registering a 70-percent increase in consulting revenues and a 40-percent increase in training revenues.

SAP officials also said they will continue to expand their market presence, as the company attempts to zoom in on the local small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) market, an "unchartered" region for SAP.

SAP has recently appointed a new company to sell software specifically for the SME market segment.

Gadgets, gizmos at INQ7.net

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INQ7 Interactive Inc., the joint-venture online company of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network, takes a look at the latest high-tech toys with the Gadgets and Gizmos minisite at www.inq7.net/specialfeatures/gadgets/index.htm.

This week, learn how to store information in a cool device that doubles as a keychain. Create homemade videos with a handy plug-and-play PC camera. Find out which personal digital assistant is right for you.

Check out the current crop of smaller but more powerful mobile phones.

Root for your favorite console in the latest round of the video game wars. And don't forget to join the IBM Trivia Contest for a chance to win cool prizes.

Visit Gadgets and Gizmos today, and find out why these toys aren't just for little girls and boys.

WANNA find out more about the latest techno-toys? Check out www.inq7.net/specialfeatures/gadgets/index.htm.

Microsoft . . .

From page F1

Microsoft also pointed out that the report showed that the total cost of ownership of using Microsoft's messaging collaborative software, the Microsoft Exchange 2000 Server, was "lower over a three-year period than IBM/Lotus' Notes R5."

"However, this report shows a significant increase in overall TCO for both systems compared to previous reports by the same firm and reports by other analyst firms," the white paper added.

In a statement released by IBM/Lotus, the company said that users of Lotus Notes can realize significant savings in the following areas:

- Downtime (including both scheduled and unscheduled) cost. Lotus Notes customers spend an average of $20.92 per user compared to $69.72 spent by Microsoft Exchange customers.
- Installation and configuration cost. Lotus has the lower total installation and configuration cost at an average of $17.94 per user, compared to over double for Microsoft with $41.15 per user.
- Acquisition cost. Lotus Notes customers spend an average $145.93 per user, compared to an average of $148.40 for Microsoft Exchange.

"This study reinforces the fact that Lotus software from IBM is indeed the market leader for messaging and collaboration worldwide and in the Philippines," said Victor Silvino, country manager, IBM and Lotus Software Group at IBM Philippines, in the statement.

In a separate interview, Jojo Ayson, product manager for Microsoft Exchange and .Net servers, said the study "should be taken with a grain of salt, and should be put in proper perspective."

"I first read that study from the Lotus website before the Lotus Sphere event this year. After that, a report came out saying that it actually showed that Exchange had a lower TCO than Notes. So I went back to the website, and was surprised to notice that they have changed the content of the report it posted on the website. Right now, the study is gone from Lotus' website," he said.

The Microsoft white paper stressed that the cost models used to assess messaging total cost of ownership vary from analyst firm to analyst firm because there is no industry standard.

"Even within the same report, differences in how costs are associated with each product can vary, leading to unreliable results. Indeed, several of the individual components reported in this report should not be used for predictive cost comparisons between Exchange Server and Notes," the white paper read.

Ayson puts it more bluntly: "Comparing Lotus Domino and Microsoft Exchange is not an apple to apple comparison." He stressed that the study even showed that TCO for both products was somewhat similar.

"Honestly, I haven't heard or read any internal memos saying that the study was commissioned by Microsoft. I cannot confirm nor deny that," he added.

Interestingly, Phillip Tan, Chinabank vice president for IT, disclosed on Wednesday that the bank is scheduled to replace its Microsoft Exchange application, which is being used as a front-end solution, with Lotus. The bank made this decision as the maintenance cost of Microsoft Exchange was reportedly higher than that of Lotus, according to Tan.

Storage solution shipped

GLEE Electronics Inc. recently shipped the Maxtor MaxAttach NAS 4300 file server, the new member of the MaxAttach Family.

The MaxAttach NAS 4000 series is optimized for storage consolidation and heterogeneous file serving. With the introduction of the new NAS 4300, users can now have increased processing power, storage and persistent storage manager snapshot technology.

Maxtor's MaxAttach NAS 4300 file server is a 400-Gb rack-mountable solution. It is the only IDE-based 1U-high file server to include software that enhances date availability by allowing administrators to periodically record a "snapshot" of the server's file system. If a file is inadvertently erased, the stored image can be accessed for instant recovery.

The product supports Windows, Unix, Linux, Macintosh and NetWare environments.

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